

## Well Child at 4 Months Old

### Diet

- Your baby should continue breast milk/formula feedings at approximately 30 oz each day or about 4-6 oz every 4-5 hours.
- If your baby is exclusively breast fed, you should continue an over-the-counter multivitamin, such as Poly-vi-sol with Iron.
- Once your baby can hold up his/her head, usually around 4-6 months, you can start feeding iron fortified rice cereal (one or two tablespoons mixed with breast milk or formula, 1-2 times a day). Use a bowl & spoon, not a bottle.
- Pureed fruits and vegetables can also be started at 4-6 months. Be sure to separate giving new foods by one week. This will help you to identify which food your baby is reacting to if he/she develops a food allergy.
- Avoid honey in the first year because it can contain harmful bacteria.
- Fruit juices are mostly sugar, and your child does not need them.
- Avoid eggs, wheat, seafood, and peanuts, which are more likely to cause allergic reactions.
- To prevent choking you should never feed your baby hard such as hot dogs, apples, grapes, or raw carrots. To find the nearest infant CPR class timings and locations call the Arlington chapter of the American Red Cross (703-527-3010, ext 736) or Virginia Hospital Center (705-558-2468). You may also sign up online at their websites.
- If your baby wakes for regular nighttime feeding, comfort him/her quietly. Do not encourage this with playtime during these feedings.

### Behavior & Development

- Infants begin to laugh aloud, reach for an object and shake a rattle.
- Your baby may begin to roll over, so don't leave him/her unattended.
- He/she may begin to laugh.
- It is never too early to start reading to your child.
- Appropriate play toys are cloth ball, chew toys, rattles, soft blankets, stuffed animals, and bright movable objects.
- Tell your doctor if your child has a "lazy eye."

### Hygiene

- Do not put Q-tips in the infant's ear canal. The out ear may be cleaned with a Q-tip or washcloth.
- Begin dental care when your baby develops his/her first tooth by wiping the tooth after meals with a damp washcloth.

### Sleep

- Some babies are sleeping through the night by 4 months of age and may nap 2-6 hours during the day.
- If your baby wakes regularly during the night, try to teach him/her to sleep without you. This is best accomplished by placing the baby in bed when drowsy, but not yet fully asleep.

- Remember to place your baby on his/her back to decrease the risk of SIDS. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends the use of a pacifier to decrease the risk of SIDS.
- Never prop a bottle or give a bottle to your infant while he/she is in bed.

### **Teething**

- Babies may begin to drool as they start teething.
- Some infants will be fussy for a few days before teeth erupt, but teething does not cause high fevers.
- Cold teething rings or cold, wet washcloths sometimes help to ease the pain. Do not use them too often because cold will freeze lips or gums.
- Before feeding, you may rub Anbesol or Orajel directly on your baby's gums. They usually provide infants about 15 minutes of relief. Tylenol can be used for pain on occasion as well.

### **Safety**

- Every time you take your child in the car he/she must be properly restrained in an infant car seat. You should use a rear facing car seat in the back seat of your car until your baby is older than 1 year and greater than 20 pounds. For more information, go to <http://www.aap.org/family/carseatguide.htm> or <http://www.nhtsa.gov> (search for "car seat").
- Avoid sunscreen until your baby is 6 months old; he/she should not be out in the sun long enough to need it or should be well covered when in the sun.
- Avoid walkers. They do not help babies walk and are associated with a higher rate of injury.
- Avoid holding your baby while cooking, smoking, or drinking hot liquids to avoid burns.
- Reduce the temperature of your water heater to less than 120°F to avoid burns.
- As your baby becomes more mobile it is important to prevent falls by never leaving your infant unattended in areas off of which he/she could roll. Always put up crib and playpen side rails.
- Your baby will explore with his/her mouth. Be sure to keep small objects such as coins or safety pins out of reach. Use unbreakable toys without sharp edges or small parts that can come loose. Keep cords and ropes away from the crib and baby.
- In case of poisoning emergency call 1-800-222-1222.

### **Immunizations**

- Your baby will receive his/her immunizations at his/her four month check-up.
- Your baby may develop redness and pain for up to 48 hours at the injection site. He/she may also develop a fever.
- You may give acetaminophen (Tylenol); ask your doctor for the dose.
- Please call if your infant has any unusual symptoms, such as allergic reactions, high fever, weakness, crying for 3 hours or if you have any concerns.

### **Illness**

- If your baby has cold symptoms, you may try nasal saline drops and bulb suctioning. Do not use any other over-the-counter medicines in a child this young.
- Avoid ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil) until your baby is at least 6 months old.

Next Visit: Your baby's next routine visit will be at 6 months. There are scheduled vaccines at this visit.