Well-Baby Checkup: 4 Months

CHILD'S NAME	DOB	DATE OF VISIT	NEXT VISIT	LENGTH	PERCENTILE	WEIGHT	PERCENTILE

Feeding Your Baby

At 4 months, your baby's primary food will still be breastmilk or fortified infant formula. Your health care provider can tell you when to start introducing solid foods. Before starting solids, your baby should normally start to:

- Sit with support
- Control head and neck
- Show interest in food
- Keep some food in mouth
- Take more than 8-10 breastfeedings or 32 ounces of formula in a day and still act hungry

Your baby's poop movements will change when solids are started.

Your baby will likely still need night feedings at this age.

Your baby does not need to drink water at this age.

Introducing First Foods

The first solid food for babies has traditionally been dry infant cereal. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, you can introduce solid foods in any order you like. First foods can also be things like pureed avocado, sweet potato and banana.

- Introduce one "single ingredient" new food from any food group every 3 to 5 days by using a soft spoon. Look for any reactions.
- Avoid home-prepared spinach, beets, green beans, squash or carrots in the first 6 months; these may contain high levels of nitrates. Nitrates are chemicals that can be found in soil, air and water that a baby cannot yet handle.
- Don't be surprised if baby spits out the food at first. It will take time to get rid of this reflex. Offer solids about twice a day. Pick a time when your baby is hungry, but not so hungry that he or she is upset.

Teething

Anytime between 4 to 15 months, your baby's first tooth will start to show. It is usually the first 2 middle teeth on the bottom, followed by the 2 middle teeth on the top. The remaining teeth (20 total) will slowly grow and show by the time he or she is 2 to 2½ years old. Your baby will drool a lot which is part of the teething process! Keep your baby's teeth and gums healthy by cleaning them 2 times a day with a washcloth or soft toothbrush.

Sleep Time

Now is the time to begin helping your baby learn good sleep habits. Here are some suggestions:

- Play actively with baby in the afternoon or early evening to encourage baby to stay awake a little longer.
- A regular bedtime routine of bath time, reading, singing or other calming activities can be helpful.
- It is not unusual for babies to cry or fuss before falling asleep.
- Begin putting your baby to bed when sleepy but still awake. This helps a baby learn to fall asleep on his or her own without your help. Your baby can have a feeding right before bedtime, but try not to nurse or bottle feed him or her to sleep. After the feeding, read, talk or play quietly for a short time, so your baby is drowsy but still awake when put in the crib.
- Make middle-of-the-night feedings brief and uneventful. Lights should stay off and you should avoid engaging your baby with talk or play. A diaper change may not be necessary.
- Do not put your baby to bed with a bottle of breastmilk or formula.

For the first 6 to 12 months of life, have your baby sleep in your room, alone in a separate crib or bassinet near your bed. Bed sharing is not recommended for any babies. This can help decrease the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) by as much as 50%.

Immunizations

Getting your baby vaccinated is one of the most important things you can do to protect your baby from serious diseases and to keep him or her healthy. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), most childhood vaccines are 90% to 99% effective in preventing disease. Having your baby fully vaccinated may also help lower your baby's risk for SIDS. Talk to your baby's health care provider if you have any questions or concerns.

No Digital Screens for Babies

It is very important for brain development and healthy parent-child connections that babies under 18 months have no screen time at all. Even if your baby isn't looking directly at a digital screen like a cellphone, computer or tablet, the lights and sounds may still cause distress and sleep problems. Bond with your baby by putting the phone away.

Your Baby's Cries – Never Shake

Crying is completely normal behavior. Crying is also how babies communicate. Your baby's cry can mean that he or she is hungry, tired, frustrated or even lonely. Don't be afraid to respond when your baby cries – it won't spoil him or her. When your baby cries and you respond right away, your baby will learn to trust you. Babies who are picked up quickly when they cry during the first 6 months will cry less later. Take advantage of offers from trusted friends and family to help. But remember, no matter how tired or upset you are, even when you have tried everything to stop your baby from crying, **you should never shake your baby**. If you think your baby has been shaken or harmed, call your health care provider right away.

Safety Tips & Reminders

PRODUCT RECALLS

In some cases, children's products like toys, equipment and clothing may be recalled. You can monitor and find out by checking the Consumer Product Safety Commission at CPSC.gov

SAFEKIDS.ORG

You can find great resources and checklists from Safekids.org for everything you need to know in keeping your child safe.

CAR SEAT – REAR-FACING

Always place your baby in an approved, rear-facing car seat. You can find out if your car seat is approved from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration website at NHTSA.gov/therightseat

Reaching Milestones & Activities

All babies develop at their own rates. Keeping track of your baby's development is important. Your job is to help your baby to learn new things when he or she is ready.

AT 4 MONTHS, YOUR BABY MAY START TO:

- Begin babbling
- Hold his or her head steady, unsupported
- Bring hands to mouth
- Copy some movements and facial expressions, like smiling or frowning
- Enjoy play with people, and he or she may cry when playing stops

If your baby was born earlier than expected, reaching his or hers milestones may be "off schedule" a bit. Talk to your baby's health care provider about any concerns or questions you may have.

Help Your Baby Learn and Grow!

As your baby grows and develops, there are many things you can do to help your baby get a good start in life and gain independence.

PLAY PEEK-A-BOO!

Play simple social games like peek-a-boo or patty cake with your baby.

SUPERVISED FLOOR TIME

Give your baby floor time to encourage stretching and kicking which can strengthen his or her muscles. Always watch your baby and never leave him or her alone.

READING

Reading to your baby has many benefits! Reading can have a lasting effect on language, literacy and early reading skills. Choose books with simple pictures and bright colors. You can point to and name objects in the pictures. Even though your baby cannot understand the words, he or she loves the sound of your voice. Reading and showing your baby pictures can help develop his or her eye muscles. The more words your baby hears over time, the more words he or she will eventually learn.

When to Call Your Baby's Health Care Provider

Your baby's health care provider is always available if you have questions or concerns. Call your Avera clinic if your baby:

- Has a temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher
- Cries a lot more than normal or can't be comforted
- Has trouble breathing
- Is limp or sluggish
- Hasn't had a wet diaper for more than 8 to 10 hours
- Is not taking breastmilk/formula

Avera's mission is to make a positive impact in the lives and health of persons and communities by providing quality services guided by Christian values. If you think you may have problems paying part of your bill, contact your local business office or billing staff. We can discuss payment options that may be available to you.

Avera

© Copyright 2021 Content from Avera is protected by U.S. copyright laws. All rights reserved. This health-related information is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice or for the care that patients receive from their health care provider.

20-PEDS-23855-ML