



Important Points for the 4 Month Visit

Nutrition:

Bottle and breast fed babies generally take 5 to 7 ounces 5 to 6 times per day. You will know that your baby is receiving adequate milk if they are gaining weight. Typical growth for this period is ½ pound per week or approximately 2.2 pounds per month during the first 6 months.

Babies do not routinely need any solid foods before 6 months of age. Early introduction of solids increases the risk of food allergies and eczema. If exclusively breastfed, continue administration of a liquid multivitamin with iron (such as D-vi-sol with iron 1 cc each day).

Development:

Holds head erect, raises body using arms from prone position, may roll front to back and back to front, may support weight on legs, reaches for and grabs objects, puts hands together, plays with hands, grabs a rattle, releases objects voluntarily, tracks and follows objects visually to 180 degrees, coos reciprocally, expresses needs through differentiated crying, may make "raspberry" sounds, smiles readily in social settings, may laugh or squeal, differentiates individuals (mother, father, sibling, caregiver). Visual acuity has increased markedly so that the infant can now see all colors, and depth perception, distance and other perceptual skills will be at nearly adult levels by 6 months of age. We call this stage a "burst in cognition". Salivary glands mature.

Touchpoints:

- The fussy periods at the end of the day have been replaced by a period of intense communication.
- Sleep: Your baby does not need a late-night feeding and doing so will reinforce night-time waking. Continue to put him to bed before he's completely asleep. A baby who is rocked to sleep or falls asleep at the breast/bottle is not teaching herself to fall asleep; she's learning to use you for that purpose. Learning to sleep through the night is the child's issue. If she can be helped to adjust to it early it will not become a "problem" later on.
- Your baby's new found sensory and motor skills might interfere with feeding because the baby will want to look around and listen. This is only a temporary lapse (1-2 weeks) in feeding.

Safety:

- Recognize early signs of infection in the infant: poor feeding, poor color, listlessness, weak cry, rectal temp of above 100.4 degrees F, breathing problems, unusual fussiness, vomiting or diarrhea, sleeping more than usual. After 3 months of age, if your child's temperature is over 102.5, she should be seen within 24 hours.
- Continue to use a rear facing car seat and never place your baby in the front passenger seat. Use a crib with slats not more than 2 and 3/8 inches apart.
- Do not leave your baby alone in a tub of water, or on high places such as a changing table, bed or sofa. Never eat, drink or carry anything hot near or while you are holding the baby. Turn your water heater down to 120 degrees F.
- Install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and check that they work properly every month. Keep the baby's environment free of smoke: no smoking in the home or car.

What to expect during this visit:

- Your baby will receive the following immunizations: Pentacel (DTaP, Hib, IPV), Prevnar and oral Rotateq.
- Your baby may run a fever and be irritable for 24-48 hours after getting the shots. Please refer to the "After the Shots" handout for specific instructions.
- We will discuss your baby's growth and development and any other concerns that you may have. Please prepare and bring in questions for your next visit at 6 months. At 6 months, your baby will receive his next set of immunizations; please bring his immunization record to every visit.