

4 Month Checkup

Date: _____

Weight: _____

Height: _____



“One of my favorite things about 4 months is hearing my little guy find his voice—I love his baby babble noises!”

—Mom of a Kaiser Permanente Member

Your baby may be ready to:

- Roll over
- Babble, coo, smile, laugh, and squeal
- Grasp toys
- Sleep for up to 6 hours at night

Feeding

- Breast milk is the best food for your baby and all the nutrition your baby needs for the first 6 months of life.
- Breastfeed your baby “on demand.” Let your baby decide when and how long to nurse.
- If you breastfeed only, give your infant vitamin drops containing vitamin D every day to help develop strong bones. Follow the directions on the package. Continue giving the drops until your baby is weaned and getting enough vitamin D from fortified formula (before 12 months) or whole cow’s milk (after 12 months).
- If you don’t breastfeed, continue formula.
- Over the next few months your baby may be ready for solid foods.
- Let your baby decide how much to eat.

Healthy Habits

- Don’t smoke! Smoking increases the risk of SIDS (crib death), ear infections, asthma, colds, and pneumonia. Talk with your doctor or contact the Health Education Department if you would like to quit smoking.
- Wash your hands before feeding and after changing diapers.
- Do not put your baby down to sleep with a bottle.
- It’s best to keep your baby out of the sun completely. If protective clothing and shade are not available, use a broad spectrum (UVA and UVB protection) sunscreen on small areas of the body, such as the face and the backs of the hands.
- Take your baby for walks.
- Children under age 2 should not watch TV or videos. Too much TV may negatively affect early brain development.

Safety

- **Use the car seat for every ride.** Your baby should always ride in a rear-facing car seat properly installed in the back seat. If you have questions or need help installing your car seat call 1-866-SEATCHECK or visit www.seatcheck.org.
- **Avoid SIDS (crib death).** Put your baby to sleep on his/her back (not on the side or stomach). Place baby on a firm, flat mattress in his/her own crib. Babies should sleep near their mothers in a safe crib, but not in the same bed. If you have questions about bed sharing, talk to your physician or nurse practitioner.
- **Continue to offer your baby a pacifier** at nap time and bed time. Babies who sleep with pacifiers during the first year may be less likely to experience SIDS (crib death).
- **Do not use walkers.** Walkers can easily tip over and lead to serious injury.
- **Prevent falls.** Do not leave your baby alone on a bed, sofa, or table.
- **Prevent choking.** Keep small objects and balloons away from your baby.
- **Avoid burns.** Do not warm bottles in the microwave. Do not drink hot liquids when you are near your baby.
- **Avoid lead poisoning.** Tell your doctor if your child spends a lot of time in a house built before 1978.
- **Never leave your child unattended with any animal,** even family pets. Learn to recognize signs of aggression in your pets.

Parenting

- Talk, read, and sing to your baby every day. Words help your baby’s brain grow.
- If your baby is teething, gently rub the baby’s gums or use safe teething rings.
- Never leave your baby alone at home or in a car.
- Put your baby on his/her stomach when awake to help strengthen your baby’s neck and arms.
- Give your baby brightly colored toys.

Solid Foods: When and How

Some parents are eager to begin feeding their babies solid foods, but there's no need to rush. Most pediatricians now recommend that babies wait to begin solid foods until they are around 6 months old. Until this age, your baby is getting all the nourishment he or she needs from breast milk or formula.

- Most babies will start to show signs that they're ready for solid foods over the next few months. These signs include:
 - Sitting up without support.
 - Showing interest in what other family members are eating.
 - Being able to take food into his mouth from a spoon and swallow it, rather than pushing it back out.
 - Anticipating the next bite when he/she sees a spoon approach.
- When you first offer solid foods, choose something smooth, semi-liquid, and easy to digest. Options include pureed soft fruits or vegetables and infant cereals like rice or oatmeal.

Continue feeding your baby breast milk or formula throughout this period. It won't be time to switch to whole cow's milk or soy milk until your baby is at least 12 months old. Juice is not recommended at this age. The only fluids your child needs are breast milk or formula.

Tips for Starting Solids

Age Range	Type of Food	Notes
Around 6 months and up	Cooked, pureed vegetables and fruits	Use breastmilk or formula to thin out fruits and vegetables as needed.
	Mashed soft fruits (banana, avocado)	Introduce a new food every few days. If you notice a reaction (rash, diarrhea, breathing problems, or gas) it could be a food allergy. Consult your pediatrician.
	Pureed meats	
	Cottage cheese, plain yogurt	It's normal for your baby's stools to become firmer and less frequent after starting solid foods.
	Iron-fortified infant cereals (oat, rice, barley), whole grain preferred	Do not add salt or sugar to baby's foods.
	Mashed soft beans or lentils	

This information is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of medical advice or care you receive from your child's physician or other health care professional. If you have persistent health problems, or if you have additional questions, please consult with your child's doctor. If you have questions or need additional information about your child's medication, please speak to your pharmacist.

What To Do If Baby Is Choking

- If your baby is able to cough or cry, it's a good sign that he/she is getting enough air. Call us if you are concerned.
- If your baby cannot breathe or cry, he/she is probably choking. Call 911 immediately, then do the following:

Step #1: Call 911. Then, do the following: Hold baby face down on your forearm. Support the head.



Step #2: Give 5 back blows. Use the heel of one hand to thump gently but firmly on the baby's back between the shoulder blades.

Step #3: Turn your baby face up on your forearm with baby's head lower than the baby's chest.



Step #4: Place two or three fingers just below the nipple line and give up to five thrusts.

Step #5: Open your baby's mouth and lift the tongue. If you see an object, gently sweep it out with your finger.

Step #6: If your baby is not breathing, tilt the head back and give two breaths.

Take a CPR Training class for more information.

OTHER RESOURCES

Websites

My Doctor Online
kp.org/mydoctor
American Academy of Pediatrics
healthychildren.org
La Leche League International
lalecheleague.org
Preventive Ounce
preventiveoz.org

Books

Nursing Mother, Working Mother—Pryor.
Caring for Your Baby and Young Child: Birth to Age 5—American Academy of Pediatrics.
Our Baby, The First Year—Von Cramm, et al.

Please share
this handout with anyone
who takes care of your child.

- ★ The next checkup is when your baby is 6 months old.
- ★ Immunizations (shots) are recommended at the next visit.