

WELL CHILD: THE FOUR-MONTH-OLD (1 OF 2)

VIRGINIA MASON MEDICAL CENTER – PEDIATRICS AND ADOLESCENT MEDICINE

www.virginiamason.org/pediatrics

Name _____ Weight _____ lbs. _____ oz.
Date _____ Length _____ in.
Head Circumference _____ cm

NUTRITION

- To prevent vitamin D deficiency, breastfed infants should take 400 IU of supplemental vitamin D every day. You can give 1 mL of over-the-counter infant vitamin drops (such as D-Vi-Sol, Tri-Vi-Sol, or Poly-Vi-Sol, with or without iron), or 1 mL of “Just D” (available at sunlightvitamins.com and at some pharmacies), or 1 DROP (not 1 mL!) of Carlson for Kids Ddrops (400 IU per drop), every day.
- Breastfed infants over age 4 months also need 10 mg of supplemental iron every day, which they will get if they are taking at least 24 oz. of supplemental iron-fortified formula per day, or 2 servings (1/4 cup each, measured dry) of iron-fortified infant cereal per day. If not, simply give Tri-Vi-Sol WITH IRON or Poly-Vi-Sol WITH IRON 1 mL daily to meet both the vitamin D and iron requirement for your baby. Be careful with iron as it may stain clothing.
- Babies are usually ready for solids between 4 and 6 months of age. Readiness is indicated by an increase in the quantity or frequency of feedings or an increased interest in your food. Commit to good nutrition for the entire family.
- Go slowly and have fun! Initial solid feedings are a developmental experience. They do not replace a bottle or breastfeeding. Solids will gradually become a more important source of nutrition over time.
- START WITH PLAIN INFANT CEREAL with iron. Mix cereal with formula, breast milk, or water in a bowl, and feed it to your baby with a spoon. Do not put it in a bottle.
- Start once a day. Let your baby determine the amount. Please stop when your baby turns away or “zips the lips” together.
- INTRODUCE VEGETABLES AND FRUITS when the art of swallowing has been mastered.
- Leave 2–3 days in between the introduction of new, single ingredient, pureed fruits and vegetables (stage 1 baby food). If your baby is intolerant to a certain food, you may notice an increase in fussiness, gas, rash, spitting up, or diarrhea. True allergies, however, are rare at this age.
- Finger foods are usually introduced between 7 and 9 months.
- No honey until one year of age.

NUTRITION — LOOKING AHEAD

- 6 MONTHS: Solids 1–3 times a day, 24–32 ounces of breast milk or formula, introduction of a cup.
- Children do not need juice. If you decide to give your child juice, put it in a cup and limit it to less than 4 oz. a day.
- Remember: do not give your baby the bottle in the crib.

DEVELOPMENT FROM 4 – 6 MONTHS

- Sits steadily if supported, no head lag when pulled to sit, supports weight on legs.
- Grasps and reaches for objects and explores the object with the mouth. Smiles, coos, giggles, squeals, and initiates interactions; RECOGNIZES PARENTS!
- If you have any concerns about your baby’s vision or hearing, please let me know.

SLEEP

- Place in crib awake; establish a night routine which everyone enjoys.
- At 4 months of age your child is hopefully sleeping for 6–8 hours at night. If your child falls asleep independently at the beginning of the night, it will be easier for your baby to go back to sleep in the middle of the night without your help. This is the time to discontinue swaddling. Setting a daytime nap routine can help make naps more regular.
- Some babies have transitional objects (comfort objects) as early as four months.
- Your infant should sleep only on his/her back as this reduces the risk of sudden infant death syndrome.
- There is usually no need to change the diaper of a sleeping baby.

ACTIVITIES

- Give baby toys and textures to grab. Unbreakable mirrors can be fun for your baby. Once your baby can easily put toys to the mouth, substitute chew toys for the pacifier. Encourage time on the tummy.
- TV and videos, even “educational” programs, are not recommended, and do not help your baby’s development.
- No screen time is recommended before the age of 2. Do not entertain your baby with videos or apps on the phone, lap top or television. The human voice is the best stimulant for developing infant brains.

PARENTING

- Have you gone out on a date since becoming parents? Start a babysitter list and sitter information sheet to leave with caregivers. Include your home address, directions, home phone number, mobile phone number or other contact information, poison control, and 911.

WELL CHILD: THE FOUR-MONTH-OLD (2 OF 2)

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- Eruption of teeth can begin anytime from 4–12 months. Keep teeth clean with a wash cloth after meals. To soothe discomfort, try a cold, wet cloth or teethers for your baby to chew. Acetaminophen can be used if your baby seems particularly uncomfortable.
- Stranger awareness and separation anxiety may occur now.

SAFETY

- Keep powders, lotions and pins away from baby. Check toys carefully for breakage or sharp or small parts.
- Avoid direct sunlight; sunburns happen easily. Use light cotton clothing. If direct sunlight is unavoidable, use sunscreen.
- **DO NOT USE BABY WALKERS!** Babies can be seriously injured in them, even with close supervision or automatic wheel locks, and walkers do not help a child learn to walk. **Stationary** devices, however, such as Exersaucers or Johnny Jump Up baby exercisers are generally okay for limited periods of time.
- Always use a properly fitted rear-facing car seat. The center rear seat is the safest position.
- Check your smoke detectors and fire extinguishers on a regular basis. Have a family fire exit plan: ladders in upstairs bedroom, etc.
- We do not recommend that your baby wear a necklace or other similar jewelry due to choking and strangulation risk.

IMMUNIZATIONS TODAY

- Please tell your doctor if your baby had any reactions to the 2-month vaccines.
- You may find detailed information about vaccines, including our recommended schedule and links to the CDC's Vaccine Information Statements, at virginiamason.org/immunizations.
- Your baby may develop a fever, fussiness, sleepiness, and/or tenderness at the injection site(s) for 24–48 hours after receiving vaccines. You may give acetaminophen for these symptoms if needed. The dose is determined by your child's weight (see chart). Do not give ibuprofen (Motrin or Advil) to infants under 6 months of age.

Acetaminophen (Tylenol)

Child's Weight	Infant's or Children's Suspension (160 mg/5 mL)	PLEASE NOTE
6–12 lbs	1.25 mL	The old concentrated acetaminophen infant drops (80 mg/0.8 mL) are being phased out and should no longer be used. For more information, visit snipurl.com/NewTylenolDosing
12–18 lbs	2.5 mL	
18–24 lbs	3.75 mL (3/4 tsp)	
over 24 lbs	5 mL (1 tsp)	

Acetaminophen may be given every 4 hours but not more than 4 times in 24 hours.
Please call the office if a fever persists for more than 2 days or if you have any questions about your child's illness or vaccine side effects.

NEXT VISIT

- Please schedule your baby's 6-month appointment as you leave today.

BOOKS / RESOURCES

Your Baby's First Year by the American Academy of Pediatrics

Caring for Your Baby and Young Child: Birth to Age 5 by the American Academy of Pediatrics

Immunizations & Infectious Diseases An Informed Parent's Guide by the American Academy of Pediatrics, Margaret C. Fisher, M.D., FAAP, Editor-in-Chief

Healthy Sleep Habits, Happy Child by Marc Weissbluth, M.D.

Solve Your Child's Sleep Problems by Richard Ferber, M.D.

Sleeping Through the Night, Revised Edition: How Infants, Toddlers, and Their Parents Can Get a Good Night's Sleep by Jodi A. Mindell, Ph.D.

The No-Cry Sleep Solution: Gentle Ways to Help Your Baby Sleep Through the Night by Elizabeth Pantley

My Child Won't Sleep: A Quick Guide to the Sleep Deprived Parent, by Sujay Kansagra

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cispimmunize.org

healthychildren.org

immunizationinfo.org

peps.org

postpartum.net

smokefree.gov

sunlightvitamins.com

vaccines.gov