

Date: _____

Height: _____ %

Weight: _____ %

Head: _____ %

Four Month Visit
West End Pediatrics
westendpediatrics.com
804-740-6171

Feeding

At four months, your baby's feedings may become less frequent. Breast milk or iron fortified formula continues to be the most important source of nutrition. Continue to hold your baby for all bottle feedings to reduce the risks of choking. Some infants may be ready for strained foods between 4 and 6 months depending on their size and development. Your baby may be ready to start strained foods when their tongue thrust reflex is fading and when they can move the food to the back of their mouth by raising their tongue. Before starting strained foods, a baby should be able to sit with arm support and have good head and neck control. They also should be able to open their mouth in anticipation and tell you they are full by leaning back or turning away.

For many years, pediatricians have recommended that rice cereal mixed with formula or breast milk be the first complementary food. Experts are now recommending that meats be introduced early since they contain high levels of iron and zinc which are both very important nutrients. It is probably best to wait several days between introducing new foods. Babies initially prefer a very smooth texture (1 T of cereal with 3-4T formula or breast milk). Start with one feeding a day. When your baby gets the hang of eating strained food, increase to twice a day. By 6 months, some babies may eat strained foods 3 times a day and take 4-6 breast feedings or formula feedings. By 6 months many babies prefer thicker textured foods. You can try mashing bananas and healthy soft table food.

Honey should not be fed during the first year due to a risk of botulism. Keep the food you feed your baby as healthy as possible- avoid adding sugar or salt. Other food safety tips include the following: avoid feeding solid foods directly from the jar; discard milk or jarred foods when your baby has finished eating; and supervise your baby carefully while eating.

Safety Tips

- Continue to use your infant's rear facing car seats. If your car has side airbags check whether the vehicle manufacturer recommends that the air bags be deactivated. It is now recommended that infants and toddlers stay rear facing until they are 2 years old. If your baby is 26-28 inches long or 20 pounds, you will need to change to a convertible seat that can face backwards.
- Continue to put your baby to sleep on his/her back. Remind relatives and child care providers to do the same. Do not use any soft bedding, blankets, or pillows. Lower the crib mattress before your baby can sit up by their self. Co-sleeping is not recommended.
- Continue to keep your baby's environment free of smoke (house and car).
- Continue to keep your baby out of direct sunlight. Use sunscreen and a wide brimmed hat during the spring, summer, and fall.

- Babies may start rolling between 4 and 6 months. Don't leave your baby alone in a tub of water or on high places such as changing tables, beds, sofas, or chairs. .
- Babies start reaching for things at this time and put things in their mouths. Avoid drinking hot liquids while holding your baby. Keep toys with small parts or other small or sharp objects out of reach.
- Check your home for lead poisoning hazards (chipped lead paint, lead dust, lead water pipes, and poorly glazed pottery).

Sleeping

Establish a bedtime routine. At bedtime spend quiet time with your baby- cuddling and rocking but try to put your baby in their crib while they are still awake. Learning to fall asleep independently helps a baby sleep through the night once they no longer require night feedings. If your baby learns to roll from their back to their stomach, you do not need to roll them back over during their naps or at night.

Oral Health

Putting babies to bed with bottles containing juice, formula or any other sugary liquid can lead to dental caries. Bacteria that cause early childhood cavities can be passed from parent to infant/child by sharing spoons and putting pacifiers in parent's mouths. If teething, your baby may drool, become fussy, or mouth objects. A cold teething ring may help ease mild discomfort.

General

Schedules and routines for feeding and sleeping provide a sense of security for babies and children. You can not spoil your baby by holding them, playing, talking, singing and talking to them. Encourage your baby's vocalizations. Talk to him/her during dressing, bathing, feeding, playing and walking. Read to your baby. Play music and sing to them. Play games such as pat-a-cake, peek-a-boo, so-big. Encourage play time while your baby is on his/her stomach. "Tummy time" is important so that babies can learn to roll and eventually crawl.

**Please schedule your baby's next appointment in
2 months when your baby is 6 months old.**