

INFANT CARE: 4 months

Drs. Padgett, Bell, Thomas

PEDIATRIC ASSOCIATES

2300 Ferry, Lafayette

Development

Now your little one is very sociable. He wants your attention and will coo, laugh, squeal and smile to get it. When you respond to him, he will be so excited.

She is more aware of her hands and will spend time looking at and touching them. She will try to reach and touch, and perhaps grab, an object held in front of her - with a batting motion at first and then more precisely. If she gets an object, like a rattle, in her hand she will put it in her mouth. It is fun to let her practice by holding a rattle so she can reach for it or by positioning her near a play-gym so she can bat at the figures.

If you lie him on his stomach, he can lift his head to a 90 degree angle. Put bright toys where he can see and reach for them. Mirrors or pictures in books are often entertaining. If he has been in this position often enough, he will probably roll over onto his back.

If you sit her up on your lap, she can hold her head quite steadily now and look around. She will love to observe the household activities from this vantage point.

Play peek-a-boo. Call from across the room and he will turn his head and neck to find you. Now babies have discovered that you will come when they cry and so **not all their cries are for hunger or discomfort but they can also be for companionship.**

Feeding

Your baby still receives his nutrition from breast milk or formula - about 5 or 6 feedings daily. (Even if your baby starts to hold the bottle with you, please do not prop it up or allow him to hold it unless he is in your lap.)

Feeding recommendations are changing!

The current recommendation for feeding is to encourage fruits and vegetables. You want your child to taste and experience food, not necessarily eat a specified amount. Start when you are eating, but your baby is only a little

hungry, because food is still breast milk or formula in her/his mind. Making sure the table food is soft and easily gummed is important. Pureed fruits and vegetables are a start, but many infants like some thickness to the food. Avocado, banana, even very well-cooked broccoli can be early foods. **ALWAYS** sit next to your child when he/she is eating! Your family may have food allergies, but the recommendation is to offer allergenic food early (even those that cause reactions in other family members). This came after studies showed that late introduction was associated with a higher incidence of allergies. So, for example, eggs (eg. scrambled/hard boiled), and nuts (eg. peanut butter, almond butter) would be good to introduce in these next few months.

Give at least 2-3 days between foods before another new food is introduced to give adequate time for any allergies to show. Look for rashes, diarrhea, vomiting, persistent congestion or wheezing. If you think your child is allergic to a food, stop that food and discuss further introduction of it with your doctor. Your baby does not need any sweeter food than the naturally occurring sugar in fruits and vegetables. Juice is not needed.

Safety

Your baby will still ride rear facing in her properly secured car seat until she is **2 years old.**

Since he is able to grasp objects already, look where he will be playing for small, swallowable objects such as safety pins, buttons, coins or older children's toys. A playpen or a cleared space on the floor can be a good, safe area for your little one to play. The infant seat is much less safe now so always put it on the floor with your baby buckled up if your baby is in it. Be sure to keep a hand on your baby if he is in the tub.

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Sleep

Always lay your infant on his back to sleep.

Start good sleep habits now.

Your baby's sleep patterns are changing: By 6 months, your baby will have more adult-like sleep patterns. Adults go from light sleep to deep sleep and then back to light sleep in cycles all night long. The light sleep is very close to wakefulness and this is when it is easy to wake up if something changes in our environment. But if all is as it was when we went to sleep, we do not wake up. Same thing happens to your baby. Where and how he falls asleep, will become the way he will learn to sleep and stay asleep. If she goes to sleep in your arms, she will need to fall asleep in your arms each time. Or if he is fed to sleep or goes to sleep on the couch in front of the TV, if you move him to his bed then he will wake up in about 45 mins and cry - he needs your help to go back to sleep. If she learns to put herself to sleep, when she awakens during the night she will be able to put herself back to sleep without your help. Any sleep-inducing aids that need your intervention (music to be turned on, feeding or rocking) would be best to avoid. And night lights can stimulate the pineal gland and interfere with sleep.

So, start putting your baby to sleep **awake**, in his/her crib without a night-light or music. She will get used to the environment she sleeps in and will learn to settle herself to sleep. Your baby might awaken to feed at night, but this should disappear by 6 months (and if possible, put him/her back to bed awake rather than feeding to sleep).

Play

You are still your baby's chief entertainment. He will enjoy having you talk and sing to him. She will play with toys if you are there much more than when you are not.

This is a great opportunity for you to spend time with her.

If you are considering purchasing a walker or exerciser, please do not. They are not recommended because they can delay development.

Listen to music together—many different kinds of music, like jazz or blues, different classical composers.

Read books: baby books, rhymes, and even your own books. Show him toys and allow him to reach and grasp them. Repeat this over and over.

Don't forget "tummy time".

Please do not let your baby watch T.V. The American Academy of Pediatrics advises **no TV watching/computers/ipads/smartphone videos** for children under the age of 2 years.

Immunizations

Call us if you have concerns about how your baby is acting after the immunizations.

Usually the same vaccines which were given at 2 months are repeated now. Your baby's immune system needs reminders both to continue to make antibodies and to make them in increasing amounts, so we repeat the vaccines now and at 6 months.

Fever

Review the fever handout.

Dose of acetaminophen:

_____ every 4 hours.