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Your Four Month Old

Length _____ Pentacel (Dtap, Hib, IPV)
Weight _____ Pevnar
HC _____ Rotateq
Tylenol dose ____

NORMAL DEVELOPMENT

Your baby:

May roll from back to stomach or vice versa.

Laughs aloud while socializing.

Reaches for and bats at objects.

Shakes a rattle.

Should start to fall asleep by herself.

Holds her head steady and erect for a short time.

Pulls objects to her mouth.

DIET

Breast milk or iron-fortified formula should continue as the main source of nourishment. Breast fed babies who receive less than 32 oz. per day of formula need vitamin D supplementation. 1 dropper of TRI-VI-SOL or D-VI-SOL a day (available without prescription) meets this need.

When your baby is around 5 months of age and is appearing very interested in your food, it may be time to begin slowly introducing solids. Pureed meats and infant cereals are ideal first foods because they are rich in iron and zinc, the nutrients most commonly deficient in the diets of babies. These foods should be initially offered in small amounts. When your baby has accepted these foods, you may begin offering fruits and vegetables. Give a small amount of 1 fruit or vegetable every 4-5 days. Combination foods (eg fruit and cereal or meat and vegetable) can be given after your baby tolerates the individual components. Try a new food every 4-5 days or so until you have offered a wide variety of combinations and textures.

As your baby takes more solids, he/she should consume no more than 28-32 ounces of breast milk or formula per day.

Delaying the introduction of foods considered to be highly allergic (eggs, fish, peanuts, tree nuts) beyond 4-6 months has not been shown to reduce the incidence of allergy. These foods may be introduced at a developmentally appropriate time. In general, if your baby doesn't exhibit a rash, vomiting, wheezing or diarrhea after a new food, she is probably not allergic to it. If there is a family history of food allergy, we recommend speaking to your baby's health provider for further guidance on introducing allergic foods.

You do not need to add salt or sugar to your baby's food. Do not give honey until after 1 year of age. Avoid foods that are choking hazards, such as nuts, grapes, and raw carrots. In addition, the AAP recommends that cow's milk be avoided in babies under age 1 because of the risk of iron deficiency anemia.

ELIMINATION

Bowel movements become less frequent and more solid.

If your baby is eating well, growing well and her stools remain softer than putty, her bowel movements are normal. Stool color may be yellow, green or brown and will differ depending on her diet.

HYGIENE

Use a mild soap (Dove, Neutrogena), if any, for your infant's body. Avoid using soap on the face as this may be too drying. Gently scrub hair/scalp with baby shampoo 2 times/week.

Keep your baby's fingernails short and smooth to prevent scratches. It may be easier to cut nails with blunt tipped scissors after a bath and while your baby is sleeping. Cut nails straight across.

Clean only the outer ear with a cotton swab (Q-tip); NEVER put a swab into ear canal because you push wax in and can damage your baby's eardrum.

SAFETY

- ☉ ALWAYS restrain your baby in an appropriate car seat. All babies must ride in a rear-facing car seat until they are at least 2 years of age or until they reach the highest weight or height allowed by your car seat's manufacturer.
- ☉ Keep ALL children in the back seat to avoid airbag injuries.
- ☉ Keep water heaters set at 120 degrees or less to prevent scalding.
- ☉ Pacifiers and toys should not be hung around the neck. Never use anything around your baby with long strings, as they can become tangled and strangle her.
- ☉ Never leave your baby alone on a surface she could roll off. (Counters, tables, beds, sofas)
- ☉ Never use a microwave to heat a bottle as it can create hot spots in the formula and burn your baby's mouth. Check the temperature of the bottle before feeding. Some infants are content with room temperature or cool bottles.
- ☉ STAY with your baby EVERY second while she's in the tub. If interrupted while bathing or changing a diaper, place her in a crib or on the floor to keep her safe. A baby can drown in a few inches of water.
- ☉ NEVER prop a bottle as it may cause your baby to choke. Additionally, it can increase the risk of ear infections.
- ☉ Keep your baby away from tobacco smoke. Smoke particles can stick to clothing and upholstery in the house and car. Smoke has been linked to asthma, ear infections and possibly SIDS.
- ☉ Avoid holding your baby while you are cooking or drinking hot beverages as babies can move and be burned.
- ☉ Install smoke detectors on every floor and check batteries monthly. Replace batteries every 6 months.
- ☉ Keep EMERGENCY numbers including Poison Control (1-800-222-1222) near your telephone at all times.
- ☉ Dress your infant the way you dress yourself. In colder weather, make sure she wears a hat because most of her body heat is lost through her head.
- ☉ Your baby should always sleep on her back. Avoid floppy toys, pillows, comforters, and plastic where she sleeps because she could suffocate. Be sure all caretakers, including grandparents, know this.
- ☉ Because everything goes into babies' mouths, all toys should be washable, too large to be swallowed, and "non toxic". Watch for beads and small parts of toys that can be swallowed.
- ☉ Never use a baby walker. Use stationary "exersaucers" instead.

STIMULATION/PLAY

When your baby is awake, position her so she can watch what you are doing. Don't forget "tummy time".

Talk to, sing to and cuddle your baby.

Infants enjoy looking at mirrors, pictures of faces, and bright colors.

Babies love to suck thumbs, fingers or pacifiers.

Appropriate toys include rattles with handles, soft squeaky toys and chew toys, small plastic blocks, bright bath toys, crib gym or busy box on crib rail. Now is a good time to try an exersaucer.

Your baby may start to become attached to a favorite toy or blanket. This can comfort her when she is distressed.

TEETHING

The first tooth usually erupts between 3-6 months.

Drizzling doesn't necessarily indicate teething.

Salivary glands become functional at about 4 months of age and cause drooling.

LOOKING AHEAD

Before your next visit your baby may:

- ☉ start eating baby foods.
- ☉ sit unassisted.
- ☉ blow "raspberries".
- ☉ sleep through the night consistently.

SUGGESTED READINGS

Solving Your Child's Sleep Problems by Richard Ferber
Healthy Sleep Habits, Happy Child by Marc Weissbluth
What to Expect the 1st Year by Heidi Murkoff, Sandee Hathaway, Arlene Eisnberg

NOTES:

Poison Control Hot Line: 1-800-222-1222

☉ Your next scheduled visit will be at 6 months.

☉ Immunizations for the next scheduled visit:

Pediarix (Dtap, IPV, HepB), Prevnar, Hib, Rotateq