

4 month old check-up

Patient and Family Education

This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child's doctor or a member of your child's healthcare team about specific care of your child.

TIPS FOR TAKING CARE OF YOUR BABY

CARING FOR YOUR BABY

- Your baby needs your love. Hold him, rock him and cuddle him.
- Do not be afraid of spoiling your baby.
- Babies like music and gentle voices. Read, talk, sing and laugh with your baby. Your baby will make baby sounds and “talk” back to you.
- Babies cry a lot.
 - When they cry, they tell you that they need something. They could be hot, cold, hungry or wet. They may also just want to be held, interact with someone, or suck on a pacifier or their fingers.
 - It is OK to let your baby cry for a few minutes.
 - If you get upset with your baby's crying, lay him down in his crib, and go into another room for a few minutes. Call a family member or friend for help.
- Take time out for yourself. Being a parent is hard work, and sometimes you need a break. Ask a family member or good friend who knows about babies to care for your baby, even for just an hour. Take a nap while your baby is sleeping in his crib.

YOUR BABY'S DEVELOPMENT

- Your baby may be able to:
 - Roll over from his stomach to his back.
 - Reach for toys and hold them for short periods of time. He will usually put them in his mouth.
- Your baby may like:
 - Toys that move and make music or noise.
 - Bringing his hands together and looking at them.
 - Looking at himself in a mirror.
 - Taking a walk outside in the stroller on nice days.
- Your baby may begin teething soon. He may drool and chew a lot.
- Some babies are sleeping through the night by this age.
- Place your baby on his tummy to “play” for short times when he is not sleeping. This helps him have strong muscles.

SAFETY

- Crib and changing table
 - Always place your baby on his back to sleep. Use a firm mattress. Never put fluffy blankets, pillows, stuffed animals or stuffed toys in the crib with your baby. This helps prevent crib death. (SIDS).
 - Make sure the crib slats are no more than 2 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches apart.

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- Make sure crib rails do not move up and down. If you have an older crib, check with its maker to see if they have special parts to keep the side from moving.
- Never leave your baby alone on a high place, such as a bed, couch, chair or changing table. Keep one hand on your baby at all times while changing him.
- Home
 - If you live in an older home, have it tested for lead.
 - Install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Change the batteries twice a year.
 - Keep plastic bags, ropes and strings, hot items and sharp objects out of reach.
 - Keep objects with small parts and sharp edges away from your child.
 - Do not carry hot liquids or cook while holding your baby at the same time – this can cause burns.
- Car
 - Make sure your baby rides in a car safety seat every time you go driving, no matter how short the trip.
 - Place the car seat in the back seat, facing towards the rear window. Your baby should ride like this as long as possible. Do not turn him forward-facing until he is at least 2 years old. Make sure the car seat is installed correctly. The seat should be at a 45 degree angle.
 - Do not add anything, such as blankets or harness strap covers, to your baby or the seat unless it is approved by the car seat maker.
 - Buckle the car seat to the car, and buckle your baby into the car seat.
 - Wear your seatbelt, too.
 - When you use a baby seat or car seat to carry your baby, be sure the safety strap is buckled. Never place the seat on a high place, such as a counter, and walk away.
- Smoking
 - Keep your baby away from cigarette smoke. Breathing in second-hand smoke can cause asthma, ear infections and other breathing problems.
- CPR
 - Take a baby CPR course. Call the Red Cross, American Heart Association or a local hospital for more information.

A FEW NEVER, EVER's –

To help keep your baby safe - **NEVER:**

- Leave your baby alone except in a crib or playpen.
- Leave your baby alone in a car.
- Hold your baby in your lap while riding in the car.
- Leave your baby alone in a sink or bathtub – not even to answer the door or phone or get a towel.
- Put a necklace on your baby or use ribbons or strings to tie a pacifier around your baby's neck. This can cause choking.
- Warm breastmilk or formula in a microwave. This can cause “hot spots” in the liquid and burn your baby.
- Prop a bottle to feed your baby.
- Shake your baby. This can cause brain damage, blindness and death.
- Give your baby honey. Honey sometimes contains germs that can harm babies less than 1 year old.
- Use a baby walker on wheels – it can tip over and harm your baby. Use a baby seat that has legs that sit flat on the ground instead.

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BATHING

- Always test your baby's bath water to make sure it is warm but not too hot. Set your water heater at 120°F or lower. Ask your landlord to do this if you live in an apartment.
- Your baby only needs 3 to 4 baths a week.
- Keep your baby's nails short to prevent him from scratching himself.
- Your baby does not need powders, lotions or gels on his skin unless his doctor tells you to use them.

DIAPER NEEDS

- Change your baby's diapers when they are wet or soiled. Clean his bottom with mild soap and water, or use disposable wipes. Always wash your hands well when you are done.
- Babies often make faces, grunt or turn red with bowel movements. As long as their bowel movements are soft, there is no need to worry.

FEEDING

- Give your baby only breastmilk or formula until the doctor tells you to begin feeding him cereal and other foods. He does not need water or juice until then.
- Hold your baby when you feed him. Talk to your baby in a quiet and soothing way while he eats.
- Burp your baby several times during a feeding.
- Wipe your baby's mouth with a clean, wet cloth after feedings.
- Sometimes your baby may only need to suck and not eat. He can use his hands or a pacifier.
- To help prevent problems with your baby's new teeth, even before they come in:
 - Do not prop his bottle. This can lead to tooth decay. It can also cause ear infections.
 - Wipe your baby's gums with a clean, wet cloth after each feeding.
 - Do not clean your baby's pacifier or bottle nipple by putting it in your mouth. Your saliva may contain germs that can cause problems and tooth decay for your baby.

Breastfeeding

- Eat a healthy diet with fresh fruits, vegetables and proteins like meats, nuts, beans and eggs.
- Drink milk or eat other good sources of calcium, such as yogurt, cheese, green leafy vegetables, fortified orange juice or dried beans.
- Keep taking your prenatal vitamins.
- Breastfed babies need vitamin D drops by 2 months old. Ask your baby's doctor about how many vitamin D drops to give. Also ask the doctor if your baby needs any other supplements, such as iron.
- Check with your doctor before taking any medicines. Many of them pass through your breastmilk to your baby.
- Babies eat about every 3 to 4 hours at this age when breastfed.
- You may want to give your baby your breastmilk in a bottle once in a while to get him used to it. This will help if you need to leave him with a babysitter or go back to work.
- You will know your baby is getting enough to eat if he grows well and has 6 to 8 wet diapers a day.

Bottle feeding

- Hold your baby when you feed him. Never prop his bottle.
- Babies eat about every 3 to 4 hours at this age when bottle fed.
- You will know your baby is getting enough to eat if he grows well and has 6 to 8 wet diapers a day.

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SLEEP

Have a regular bedtime and routine for your baby. This is one more way that you can help him feel more secure.

- Sing to your baby, or read him a book before he goes to sleep.
- Put your baby in the bed while he is still awake, so he can get used to falling asleep by himself.

HEALTHY HABITS

You can help keep your baby and your family healthy when you:

- Wash your hands often during the day. Have other family members wash their hands often, too. Use warm water and soap and scrub for 20 seconds.
- Make sure your baby gets needed vaccines to help prevent disease.
- Keep your baby away from cigarette smoke. Breathing in second-hand smoke can cause asthma, ear infections and other breathing problems.
- Do not give your baby **ANY** medicines unless you talk to the doctor first.

Your baby learns through play. Avoid screen time until he is 2 years old. Some examples of screen time are:

- TV
- Computers
- Videogames
- Tablet devices
- Smart phones

IF YOUR BABY EVER SEEMS ILL

If your baby feels too warm or seems ill, check his temperature with a thermometer.

- Call the doctor if your baby has a temperature **over 102.2°F or 39°C**, seems ill or you have any concerns.
- For babies less than 2 years old – take the temperature in the rectum (opening in the bottom where the bowel movement or stool comes out). Other methods are not as accurate in babies.
- Do not give your baby any medicines before talking with the doctor. This includes acetaminophen (Tylenol or other less costly store brand) and ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil or other less costly store brand).

FOR YOUR BABY'S NEXT VISIT – 6 months old

- You and your baby's doctor can talk about how things are going with your new baby.
- Your baby will have a physical examination (check-up) that may include getting vaccines. You will have a chance to ask questions.
- You may want to talk about your baby's:
 - Feeding and sleeping
 - Safety
 - Development

THINGS FOR YOU TO DO

- Keep a record of when your baby is ill or hurt. Share this record with your baby's doctors.
- Make a list of questions to talk with your doctor about at the next visit.
- Bring your baby's shot (vaccine) record to your next visit.

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