



Developmental Notes - Four Months

Milestones:

By four months of age most infants hold their heads high and push up on their arms when lying on their stomachs. They may start to roll over from front to back. Make sure your infant spends some time laying on his/her stomach while awake during the day. Reaching and grabbing of objects should also be evident, while making a fist and transferring objects from one hand to the other may occur by five months of age. Four month old infants may follow objects with their eyes through a 180 degree range.

Social Life:

At four months, most infants are aware you are across the room even though they might not see you. It is now ok for you to let your infant “fuss it out” when tired. Also, in the next few months many infants will start to demonstrate some separation anxiety from their primary caregivers. Take this as a positive sign that your infant is bonding to you. This behavior disappears over the next several months.

Safety:

The car seat should be placed in the back seat of the car facing rearwards. Do not place the seat on anything but the floor when the seat is outside of the car. Never leave a baby unattended on a bed or changing table as the infant may learn to roll over. Select toys that are unbreakable, contain no small detachable parts or sharp edges, and are too large to swallow. Never drink hot liquids while handling an infant.

Infant swim classes are not recommended. Water intoxication with seizures makes these programs somewhat hazardous. It is unlikely that you can make an infant “water safe.”

Sleep Position:

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that all infants be put to sleep on their backs. Once your infant can roll over, there is no need to flip your child onto his back if he rolls over onto his tummy while sleeping.

Diet:

Breastfeeding: Every three to six hours on demand. Some breastfed infants may be ready for solids.

Formula: Use an iron containing cow’s milk based formula every two to four hours as needed. Your doctor will help you determine if a special formula is needed. Most babies this age eat 24 to 32 ounces per day. Your child will determine the amount he/she needs.

Cereal: If you are instructed to start your child on cereal, we recommend trying rice cereal first. Mix one or two tablespoons of dry rice cereal in a bowl with one to two ounces of formula. For the first few feedings, the mixture should be very thin. After a few days, gradually thicken the cereal to a pasty consistency. After two weeks of rice cereal, barley or oatmeal can be given. After two more weeks the third cereal can be given. Do not give mixed cereal that contains wheat. Give the cereal twice daily, for dinner and breakfast. Start with dinner first. Feed the bottle after the solids.

REMEMBER...If your infant does not want the cereal, he/she does not have to eat it. Try it a few times and if your infant refuses, wait a week and try it again.

Vegetables: Vegetables can be fed at “lunch time”. Stage I Jar brands, frozen or vegetables pureed at home all are fine. Start with the yellow vegetables first, i.e. carrots, squash, sweet potatoes, then move to the greens. Try a different vegetable no more frequently than every three days. This may give you a better chance at detecting food allergies.

NOTE: Yellow vegetables may cause your infants skin to appear orange in color. This is called carotenemia. Do not worry about this as it is a normal process and is not harmful. It will disappear once the volume of foods containing Beta carotene is diminished.

Fruits: A new fruit may be added at breakfast or dinner along with the cereal. Try a new fruit every three days to watch for allergies. Bananas, pears, peaches and apple sauce are okay to try.

Honey: Do **NOT** give your child raw or uncooked honey in the first year of life. Honey may contain botulism spores. Botulism is a complicated disease that can cause muscle paralysis. Please do not feed your infant raw or uncooked honey or put it on your child's pacifier.

Vitamins:

All infants require vitamin D to prevent rickets and vitamin D deficiency. Regretfully, breast milk does not provide this essential vitamin. Therefore, all breastfed infants, unless they are weaned to at least 33 ounces of vitamin D-fortified formula or milk, require vitamin supplementation with at least 400IU (international units) of Vitamin D per day.

Similarly, all non-breast fed infants who receive less than 33 ounces of Vitamin D-fortified formula should receive vitamin supplementation with at least 400IU (international units) of Vitamin D per day.