

WELL CHILD: THE FOUR MONTH OLD (1 OF 2)

VIRGINIA MASON FRANCISCAN HEALTH – PEDIATRICS AND ADOLESCENT MEDICINE
<https://www.vmfh.org/our-services/primary-care-in-person-and-virtual-care/pediatric-care>

Name	_____	Weight	_____ lbs.	_____ oz.
Date	_____	Length	_____	_____ in.
		Head Circumference	_____	_____ cm.

NUTRITION

- After age 4 months, breastfed infants or infants taking less than 32 oz of formula still need 10 mcg (400 IU) of vitamin D every day and should also start taking 10 mg of supplemental iron daily. This is most easily done by switching from a vitamin D supplement to a multivitamin WITH IRON for infants. There are several options available, including Enfamil Poly-Vi-Sol with Iron, NovaFerrum YUM!, and Mommy's Bliss Baby Multivitamin + Iron. Be careful with iron as it may stain clothing. They could also meet their iron requirements by eating 2 servings (1/4 cup each, measured dry) of iron-fortified infant cereal per day
- Babies are usually ready for solids between 4 and 6 months of age. Readiness is indicated by an increase in the quantity or frequency of feedings or an increased interest in your food. Commit to good nutrition for the entire family.
- Go slowly and have fun! Initial solid feedings are a developmental experience. They do not replace a bottle or breastfeeding. Solids will gradually become a more important source of nutrition over time.
- Start with plain infant cereal with iron. Mix cereal with formula, breast milk, or water in a bowl, and feed it to your baby with a spoon. Do not put it in a bottle.
- Start once a day. Let your baby determine the amount. Please stop when your baby turns away or “zips the lips” together.
- Introduce vegetables and fruits when the art of swallowing has been mastered.
- Leave 2–3 days in between the introduction of new, single ingredient, pureed fruits and vegetables (stage 1 baby food). If your baby is intolerant to a certain food, you may notice an increase in fussiness, gas, rash, spitting up, or diarrhea. True allergies, however, are rare at this age.
- Finger foods are usually introduced between 7 and 9 months. No honey until one year of age.
- Consider taking an infant CPR class to learn about managing choking

NUTRITION – LOOKING AHEAD

- 6 MONTHS: Solids 1–3 times a day, 24–32 ounces of breast milk or formula, introduction of a cup.
- Children do not need juice. If you decide to give your child juice, put it in a cup and limit it to less than 4 oz. a day. Remember: do not give your baby the bottle in the crib.

DEVELOPMENT

- Sits steadily if supported, no head lag when pulled to sit, supports weight on legs.
- Grasps and reaches for objects and explores the object with the mouth. Smiles, coos, giggles, squeals, and initiates interactions; RECOGNIZES PARENTS!
- If you have any concerns about your baby’s vision or hearing, please let me know.

SLEEP

- Place in the crib awake; establish a night routine which everyone enjoys.
- At 4 months of age your child is hopefully sleeping for 6–8 hours at night. If your child falls asleep independently at the beginning of the night, it will be easier for your baby to go back to sleep in the middle of the night without your help. This is the time to discontinue swaddling. Setting a daytime nap routine can help make naps more regular.
- Some babies have transitional objects (comfort objects) as early as four months.
- Your infant should sleep only on his/her back as this reduces the risk of sudden infant death syndrome. There is usually no need to change the diaper of a sleeping baby.

ACTIVITIES

- Give baby toys and textures to grab. Unbreakable mirrors can be fun for your baby. Once your baby can easily put toys to the mouth, substitute chew toys for the pacifier. Encourage time on the tummy.
- TV and videos, even “educational” programs, are not recommended, and do not help your baby’s development.
- No screen time is recommended before the age of 2. Do not entertain your baby with videos or apps on the phone, laptop or television. The human voice is the best stimulant for developing infant brains.

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PARENTING

- Have you gone out on a date since becoming parents? Start a babysitter list and sitter information sheet to leave with caregivers. Include your home address, directions, home phone number, mobile phone number or other contact information, poison control, and 911.
- Eruption of teeth can begin anytime from 4–12 months. Keep teeth clean with a washcloth after meals. To soothe discomfort, try a cold, wet cloth or teethers for your baby to chew. Acetaminophen can be used if your baby seems particularly uncomfortable.
- Stranger awareness and separation anxiety may occur now.

SAFETY

- Keep powders, lotions and pins from the baby. Check toys carefully for breakage or sharp or small parts. Avoid direct sunlight; sunburns happen easily. Use light cotton clothing. If direct sunlight is unavoidable, use sunscreen.
- DO NOT USE BABY WALKERS! Babies can be seriously injured in them, even with close supervision or automatic wheel locks, and walkers do not help a child learn to walk. Stationary devices, however, such as Exersaucers or Johnny Jump Up baby exercisers are generally okay for limited periods of time.
- Always use a properly fitted rear-facing car seat. The center rear seat is the safest position.
- Check your smoke detectors and fire extinguishers on a regular basis. Have a family fire exit plan: ladders in upstairs bedroom, etc.
- We do not recommend that your baby wear a necklace or other similar jewelry due to choking and strangulation risk.
- If you need assistance, helpmegrowwa.org is available to help with food resources, transportation, clothing, employment, housing, or other support.

IMMUNIZATIONS TODAY

- Please tell your doctor if your baby had any reactions to the 2-month vaccines.
- Your baby may develop a fever, fussiness, sleepiness, and/or tenderness at the injection site(s) for 24–48 hours after receiving vaccines. You may give acetaminophen for these symptoms if needed. The dose is determined by your child's weight (see chart). Do not give ibuprofen (Motrin or Advil) to infants under 6 months of age.

Acetaminophen (Tylenol)

Child's Weight	Infant's or Children's Suspension (160 mg/5 mL)
6–12 lbs	1.25 mL
12–18 lbs	2.5 mL
18–24 lbs	3.75 mL (3/4 tsp)
over 24 lbs	5 mL (1 tsp)

Acetaminophen may be given every 4 hours but not more than 5 times in 24 hours. Please call the office if a fever persists for more than 2 days or if you have any questions about your child's illness or vaccine side effects.

NEXT VISIT

- Please schedule your baby's 6-month appointment as you leave today.

BOOKS / RESOURCES

- *Your Baby's First Year* by the American Academy of Pediatrics
- *Caring for Your Baby and Young Child* by the American Academy of Pediatrics
- *Immunizations & Infectious Diseases: An Informed Parent's Guide* by the American Academy of Pediatric
- *Healthy Sleep Habits, Happy Child* by Marc Weissbluth, MD
- *Solve Your Child's Sleep Problems* by Richard Ferber, MD
- *Sleeping Through the Night* by Jodi A. Mindell, PhD
- *The No-Cry Sleep Solution: Gentle Ways to Help Your Baby Sleep Through the Night* by Elizabeth Pantley
- *My Child Won't Sleep* by Sujay Kansagra