

# 4 Month Checkup

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Weight: \_\_\_\_\_

Height: \_\_\_\_\_



*“Since I get to spend lots of quality time with my baby while breastfeeding, my husband has really enjoyed taking the lead in introducing solid food and sharing time with our daughter.”*

—Kaiser Permanente Member

## Your baby may be ready to ...

- roll over
- babble, coo, smile, laugh and squeal
- grasp toys
- sleep for at least six hours at night

## Feeding

- Breast milk is the best food for your baby and all the nutrition your baby needs for the first 6 months of life.
- Breastfeed your baby “on demand.” Let your baby decide when and how long to nurse.
- If you breastfeed only, give infant vitamin drops containing vitamin D every day to help develop strong bones. Follow the directions on the package. Continue giving the drops until your baby is weaned and getting enough vitamin D from fortified formula (before 12 months) or whole cow’s milk (after 12 months).
- If you don’t breastfeed, use formula.
- Over the next few months your baby may be ready for solid foods.
- Feed cereal from a spoon only (not a bottle).
- Let your baby decide how much to eat.
- Do not give your baby honey in the first year of life. Honey can make your baby sick.

## Healthy habits

- Don’t smoke! Smoking increases the risk of SIDS (crib death), ear infections, asthma, colds, and pneumonia. Talk with your doctor or contact the Health Education Department if you would like to quit smoking.
- Wash your hands before feeding and after changing diapers.
- Do not put your baby to bed with a bottle.
- It’s best to keep your baby out of the sun completely. If protective clothing and shade are not available, use a broad spectrum (UVA and UVB protection) sunscreen on small areas of the body, such as the face and the backs of the hands.
- Take your baby for walks.
- Children under age 2 should not watch TV or videos. Too much TV may negatively affect early brain development.

## Safety

- **Use the car seat for every ride.** Your baby should always ride in a rear-facing car seat properly installed in the back seat. If you have questions or need help installing your car seat call 1-866-SEATCHECK or visit [www.seatcheck.org](http://www.seatcheck.org).
- **Avoid SIDS (crib death).** Put your baby to sleep on his/her back (not on the side or stomach). Place on a firm, flat mattress in his/her own crib. Babies should sleep near their mothers in a safe crib, but not in the same bed. If you have questions about bed sharing, talk to your physician or nurse practitioner.
- **Continue to offer your baby a pacifier** at nap time and bed time. Babies who sleep with pacifiers during the first year may be less likely to experience SIDS (crib death).
- **Do not use walkers.** Walkers can easily tip over and lead to serious injury.
- **Prevent falls.** Do not leave your baby alone on a bed, sofa, or table.
- **Prevent choking.** Keep small objects and balloons away from your baby.
- **Avoid burns.** Do not warm bottles in the microwave. Do not drink hot liquids when you are near your baby.
- **Avoid lead poisoning.** Tell your doctor if your child spends a lot of time in a house built before 1978.
- **Never leave your child unattended with any animal,** even family pets. Learn to recognize signs of aggression in your pets.

## Parenting

- Read books to your baby daily.
- If your baby is teething, gently rub the baby’s gums or use teething rings.
- Never leave your baby alone at home, in a car, or in the bathtub.
- Put your baby on his/her stomach when awake to help strengthen your baby’s neck and arms.
- Give your baby brightly colored toys.

## Feeding - Introducing Solid Foods

If you breastfeed only, continue feeding your baby breast milk. It is ideal for mothers who breastfeed to wait 6 months before introducing solid foods. You'll know your baby is ready to eat solid foods when he or she can...

- sit without support
- push food out of the mouth and raise his/her tongue to move pureed food to the back of the mouth
- anticipate the next bite when he/she sees a spoon approach

If you don't breastfeed, you may begin to introduce solid foods when your baby is 4-6 months old. At first, offer foods that are smooth, semi-liquid, and easy to digest (such as rice cereal). As your baby learns to chew and swallow solid food and feed him/herself, you can add more kinds of foods with solid textures.

Continue feeding your baby breast milk or formula throughout this period. Once your baby is 12 months old, switch from formula to whole cow's milk or full fat soy milk. Juice is not recommended at this age. The only fluids your child needs are breastmilk or formula.

Age	Foods to Introduce	More Suggestions
4-7 mos.	Infant cereal, iron fortified (rice or barley). Do not add salt or sugar.	Use a baby spoon or a small spoon to feed your baby. Begin with one or two teaspoons of cereal mixed with breastmilk or lukewarm formula. It's normal for your baby's stools to become firmer after starting solid foods.
6-8 mos.	Cooked or soft fruits, mashed vegetables, pureed meats, cottage cheese, and plain yogurt.	Begin with plain, mildly flavored foods. Offer a new food to your baby every five to seven days. You may need to offer a new food three or four times before your baby will eat it. Gradually increase amounts and types of foods offered.
7-12 mos.	Table food, cooked eggs. Do not give whole milk, honey, or shellfish until baby is 12 mos. old. Rash, diarrhea, breathing problems or gas could mean food or milk allergy.	By 12 months old, your baby should be eating/drinking at least: 2 cups of whole milk, 4 servings (1 to 2 tablespoons [Tbsp.] each) of fruits and vegetables, 4 servings cereal (2 to 4 Tbsp. each), and two small servings of meats, poultry, or eggs (1 to 2 Tbsp. each). Avoid foods that may cause choking (whole hot dogs, nuts, chunks of meat, cheese, peanut butter, whole grapes, hard or sticky candy, popcorn, bagels, or raw vegetables).

This information is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of medical advice or care you receive from your child's physician or other health care professional. If you have persistent health problems, or if you have additional questions, please consult with your child's doctor. If you have questions or need additional information about your child's medication, please speak to your pharmacist.

## How To Determine If Your Baby Is Choking

- If your baby is able to cough or cry, it's a good sign that he/she is getting enough air. Call the Advice Nurse if you are concerned.
- If your baby cannot breathe or cry, he/she is probably choking. Call 911 immediately, then do the following:

**Step #1:** Put your baby face down on your forearm, supporting the head.



**Step #2:** Use the heel of one hand to thump gently but firmly on the baby's back between the shoulder blades up to five times.

*The chart below is only a guideline, since babies develop at different rates.*

**Step #3:** Turn your baby face up on your forearm with baby's head lower than the baby's chest.

**Step #4:** Place two or three fingers just below a line between the nipples, and give up to five thrusts.

**Step #5:** Open the baby's mouth and lift the tongue. If you see an object, gently sweep it out with your finger.

**Step #6:** If your baby is not breathing, tilt the head back and give two breaths.

**Take a CPR Training class for more information.**

## OTHER RESOURCES

### Web sites

American Academy of Pediatrics

[healthychildren.org](http://healthychildren.org)

Kaiser Permanente

[kp.org](http://kp.org)

La Leche League International

[lalecheleague.org](http://lalecheleague.org)

Preventive Ounce

[preventiveoz.org](http://preventiveoz.org)

### Books


*Nursing Mother, Working Mother*—Pryor.


*Caring for Your Baby and Young Child: Birth to Age 5*—American Academy of Pediatrics.

*Our Baby, The First Year*—Von Cramm, et al.

**Contact** your local Health Education Department or Center.

**Please share**  
*this handout with anyone who takes care of your child.*

 The next checkup is when your baby is 6 months old.

 Immunizations (shots) are recommended at the next visit.