

4-month check up

FEEDINGS:

Sometime between 4-8 months, babies will start to show a real interest in foods. The only food baby really needs is breast milk and/or infant formula. When your baby is 4-6 months old, you may begin rice cereal 1-2 times per day. Start with 1-2 teaspoons and work up to 3-5 tablespoons in the morning and evening. Do not use mixed, wheat or high protein cereal in the first year of life. If your baby has been on a low-iron formula for some reason, it is important now to change to a formula with iron, your baby may become anemic. Babies that have been breast-fed now need iron. They may have used their iron stores from birth. Breast milk does have enough iron for your baby's growth.

Most babies at 6 months will do well with a few simple foods, mashed bananas, rice cereal, or applesauce. Start these off once a day. If you give baby apple juice between feedings, remember to mix using 1/2 juice and 1/2 water. Too much apple juice can cause loose bowel movements. Introduce new foods slowly such as every 3 -4 days, so you will be able to detect when a food allergy occurs. Remember, do not feed honey or peanut butter to your baby until after 12 months of age. Don't give juices like orange juice, pineapple juice or juice blends yet as they may cause an allergic reaction in such a young child. DO NOT give your baby whole, low-fat or non fat milks. Your baby's stomach is not yet ready for those foods. Stay with the milk based formula with iron.

SAFETY:

At this age, the baby's first thought with any new object is: Can I eat it? They will put everything into his/her mouth, so be very careful that their world is free from the little objects that could be dangerous if put into their mouth: buttons, hard candies, peanuts, small toys, you name it. It is up to you to make your baby's world safe to play in and enjoy.

Your baby will soon start crawling. Put up some kind of barrier at stairways when your baby does start to crawl, or other areas that he/she could be hurt. Have you turned down the temperature of your hot water heater? Not only will the water be safer for your child, it will also save you money on your electric bill. At the this age, your baby will be rolling. So do not leave your child unattended on an elevated surface since they may fall.

Keep the phone number for Arizona Poison Control readily available.

Many of us learned that the first treatment for burns was to put butter on the burn. That is the wrong thing to do. Instead, run cold water over the bum IMMEDIATELY, up to 5 minutes. This will prevent the heat from burning deep in

the skin and will lessen the depth and seriousness of the burn. Do not put any oils or butter on the burn during the first 24 hours.

SLEEPING POSITION:

Recent research has shown that babies should not sleep on their stomachs. Babies who sleep this way have a greater risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). Babies should be put to sleep on their back or sides. Remove any bumpers in the crib to avoid accidental suffocation.

COLDS:

Most babies begin to get colds and runny noses at this age. The protection that was transferred to baby from their mother has now worn off. Most colds need no treatment. Medicines may have side effects and it is generally best to avoid using unnecessary medicines for infants. It is normal for a child to run a fever the first few days of a cold. If your baby has fever on the fourth day, there is a possibility that the cold has turned into a secondary infection. Your baby may have an ear, sinus, or bronchial infection. You may want to call your baby's doctor. DO NOT use over-the-counter cold medicines without your doctor's advice. For a cough, a cool-mist vaporizer in baby's room may allow your baby to sleep better. To remove clear mucus from your baby's nose use a nasal aspirator. Salt-water nose drops may help loosen mucus and bulb suction and will soothe the mucus membrane and make it easier to breathe.

TEETHING:

The average for baby's first tooth to break through is six months, but he/she may have pain as the tooth is cutting through the deeper layers of the gums. Teething may cause a slight change in bowel habits, a slight nasal discharge, and/or fussiness and crankiness. The common teething creams and gels will help when first applied and give only temporary relief. For teething pain you may use liquid Tylenol or Tylenol, which may be repeated every 4 hours for discomfort. Teething does not cause fever. If your baby is fussy or grouchy and has fever, contact your doctor.

IMMUNIZATIONS:

Your baby now should have received his/her second set of shots. Remember to ask your baby's doctor to update your record book. Be sure to report any unusual reaction after the shots to your baby's doctor. Always bring your child's shot record with you.

HOUSEHOLD ITEMS TO HAVE ON HAND:

1. Electrical outlet covers
2. A Car seat
3. Childproof latches on cabinets.