



Pediatric Partners, L.L.C.

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THE FOUR MONTH CHECK-UP

Return in Two Months

Check-up Snapshot

WT _____ %
 HT _____ %
 H.C. _____ %

Immunizations

DTaP _____ HepB _____
 Hib _____ MMR _____
 Polio _____ Vaivax _____
 Date _____ M.D. _____

You might be surprised to know that this was probably the easiest time for you, a parent, because for the most part all you needed to do was feed this growing human machine, clothe him, wash him and most important of all, love him. But now, in addition to doing all this, you are going to have to learn to parent. Parenting is the never-ending process of nurturing this growing human being into a happy well-adjusted adult. It is a very tough assignment and most of us never have any formal training in this area. That's why you see so many magazines and books written on the subject. But if you read every publication on child rearing you would probably be totally confused, so just pick one or two good books to help you, ask questions you may have during your well baby check-ups, and use your own intuition, and you'll be doing a great job.

FEEDINGS

Iron fortified formula or breast milk is still the only required source of calories for your baby at this age. If you are bottle-feeding, the average formula intake is 6-7 ounces per feeding, 4-5 times per day which works out to around 24-32 total ounces per day. Some days the baby may take more and some days less. Here are a few warnings about bottle-feeding:

- Never prop the bottle on a pillow and allow the baby to eat while you are off doing other things. If he should choke, he may not be able to clear the formula himself. Always hold the bottle yourself, and keep the baby tilted slightly up, never flat, so his head is higher than his feet.
- Never mix cereal with formula and feed through a bottle.
- Do not mix honey with the formula or with water. It is best to avoid honey completely during the first year of life to prevent infant botulism. Botulism results in life-threatening paralysis. The botulism spores found in honey apparently only affect children less than a year of age.

- Do not mix vitamins or other medications with the formula.
- Do not put the baby to bed with a bottle. This will create more problems for your child as he gets older. Children who fall asleep with the bottle in their mouth, are exposing their developing teeth to the sugar in the milk and making him more susceptible to tooth decay. It will also increase his chances of developing an ear infection. Again, prevention is the important thing to remember.

Breast fed babies require the same number of feedings per day and often still require one or two night-time feedings. Breast fed babies often get into the habit of snacking during the day because they are easily distracted by just about any sound they hear or movement they detect, and once they are distracted they often will not go back to nursing. This of course means that they get hungrier more quickly and want to nurse again in a shorter period of time. If you think this is happening, try nursing in a room of the house where the distractions will be less, turn on some good music to block out other sounds and place a light blanket over the baby to cut down on the visual distractions and hopefully you will get in a good 20-30 minutes of nursing.

STARTING SOLID FOODS

Early introduction of solid foods as early as one month of age was considered the norm many years ago. Today we recommend waiting until the baby is between 4-6 months of age and has achieved a weight of 13-16 lbs. Formula or breast milk will meet all the nutritional needs of a baby up until this time. Still, parents are often encouraged by well meaning friends and relatives to begin solids much earlier. Common misconceptions about early feedings of solid food include helping the baby to sleep at night, alleviate colic, and making the baby spit up less often.

Early introduction of solid foods may be associated with more problems with food and other allergies later on in life if they are introduced too early. During these early months, the baby's digestive tract is still in a developing