

HEART OF TEXAS PEDIATRICS—Dr. Nesmith and Dr. Chakmakjian
4 MONTHS

Patient _____

Weight _____ **Height** _____

FEEDING: By 4 months of age the number of feedings has generally been reduced to 4 or 5 per day. Bottle-fed babies can take up to 32 ounces a day. Most babies take about 6 ounces every 4-5 hours. Your infant receives plenty of vitamin C in his milk intake so there is no rush to start fruit juice. If given now, limit juice intake to 4 ounces a day so nutrition is not compromised. Babies should remain on breast milk or formula until 12 months of age. Most babies will be ready to begin solid foods at four months of age. Some indicators that your baby is ready to start solids are: a) if your baby begins to demand consistently more frequent nursing (over 10 times in 24 hours), b) if a bottle fed baby is routinely demanding more than 35 ounces of formula in 24 hours, c) your baby has been sleeping through the night and begins waking up to feed during the night, and d) your baby is able to hold his head up enough to eat from a spoon. Even after adding solids, breast milk or formula should be your baby's primary source of nutrition.

DEVELOPMENT: Babies this age can hold a firm grasp on objects and have better "eye-hand" coordination. They should easily lift their head and chest when on their stomach and many can roll front to back. They usually like to stand and support their weight (it will not make them bow-legged) and often enjoy "Johnny-Jump Up" devices and/or play saucers for limited periods of time (no more than one hour/day). The AAP does not recommend walkers due to higher risk of injury, especially if stairs are present. Babies this age have little, if any, stranger anxiety in the next few months so it is a great time for grandparents to enjoy the baby. Your baby should laugh, squeal, and vocalize displeasure at this age.

TEETHING: Teething is a continual process that may begin before 4 months of age and continues until around 3 years of age when all of the baby teeth are present. The lower central incisors typically come in at 6-8 months, but can vary from 4 months to over 1 year of age. Teething does not cause fever > 101, congestion, extreme irritability or wakefulness. It can cause drooling, loose stools, and mild fussiness. Your baby might experience some relief with cold teething rings, Orajel topically, and/or Tylenol.

SLEEP: Most babies will sleep through the night at 4 months of age and if not, they should be by 6 months. It is good to get into a habit of putting your baby in the crib when drowsy, but still awake. If the last thing your baby remembers before falling asleep is being rocked and fed, he/she may demand this to go back to sleep once awakened. By this age, your baby does not need to be fed during the night. Upon awakening, try patting, stroking, or rocking your baby or replacing the pacifier to help with falling back asleep. A bedtime routine is important for your baby to get drowsy before bedtime. This may include baths, rocking, bedtime reading, blankets (or other security objects), etc. Most babies this age nap 4-6 hours in the daytime and may sleep up to 16 hours total per day.

HEALTH: Babies average 6-8 colds per year. Colds are caused by viruses and cause a runny nose, congestion, and typically low-grade fever. Since antibiotics treat bacterial infections but NOT viral infections, they do not help colds to resolve any sooner. Giving antibiotics when unnecessary may increase your child's risk of having resistant bacteria. Colds typically make it harder for babies to sleep and eat. Using a bulb syringe with normal saline drops or spray to suction mucous from the nose will help with breathing, especially before feeding and sleeping. If acting ill, take a rectal temperature. If your baby has a persistent fever > 101, is taking fluids poorly, is working hard to breathe (nostrils flaring, ribs consistently showing between breaths, or breathing hard and fast), or not acting right, call our office. A cool mist humidifier in your baby's room will also help with his/her breathing as well as elevating the head of the bed when sleeping.

SAFETY: Car seats are required by state law and are the safest way for your baby to travel. Infants should be placed in an infant carrier and rear-facing until 1 year of age AND more than 20 pounds. Some infants will outgrow their infant carrier before a year and need a bigger, convertible (forward and rear-facing) car seat before a year. Your baby should never be left alone with pets, young children, or on a

changing table or bed without rails. Crib slats should be no wider than 2 and 3/8 inches to avoid injury. Hanging mobiles or toys should be removed before your baby can reach them. Keep cords, ropes, and strings away from your baby as well as plastic bags and balloons. Water heaters should be set no higher than 120 degrees to prevent scalding. Smoke detectors should be installed and checked monthly and replace the batteries once a year, helpful if on your baby's birthday. Infants this age are starting to reach and should not be held by anyone carrying a hot liquid or smoking. Second-hand smoke travels throughout the home even if you smoke in another room. This increases the number of ear infections and respiratory infections and should be avoided indoors and in cars. Even smoking outside increases the risk of these infections so if you are considering quitting smoking, this is a great time to do it. Your doctor can help you to break the habit!

IMMUNIZATIONS: Immunizations are an important part of your child's healthcare and help prevent a number of serious and life-threatening diseases. You will receive information on the various vaccines, possible reactions, and the diseases they prevent. Today your baby will receive DtaP #2 (Diphtheria, Tetanus, and Pertussis), IPV #2(Polio), Prevnar #2, and Comvax #2 (combination of Hepatitis B and Hemophilus influenza, type B). Be sure to bring your baby's shot record with you on every visit.

YOUR CHILD'S NEXT VISIT IS AT SIX MONTHS OF AGE.