



# BRIGHT FUTURES HANDOUT ► PARENT

## 4 MONTH VISIT

Here are some suggestions from Bright Futures experts that may be of value to your family.

### ✓ HOW YOUR FAMILY IS DOING

- Learn if your home or drinking water has lead and take steps to get rid of it. Lead is toxic for everyone.
- Take time for yourself and with your partner. Spend time with family and friends.
- Choose a mature, trained, and responsible babysitter or caregiver.
- You can talk with us about your child care choices.

### ✓ FEEDING YOUR BABY

- For babies at 4 months of age, breast milk or iron-fortified formula remains the best food. Solid foods are discouraged until about 6 months of age.
- Avoid feeding your baby too much by following the baby's signs of fullness, such as
  - Leaning back
  - Turning away

#### If Breastfeeding

- Providing only breast milk for your baby for about the first 6 months after birth provides ideal nutrition. It supports the best possible growth and development.
- Be proud of yourself if you are still breastfeeding. Continue as long as you and your baby want.
- Know that babies this age go through growth spurts. They may want to breastfeed more often and that is normal.
- If you pump, be sure to store your milk properly so it stays safe for your baby. We can give you more information.
- Give your baby vitamin D drops (400 IU a day).
- Tell us if you are taking any medications, supplements, or herbal preparations.

#### If Formula Feeding

- Make sure to prepare, heat, and store the formula safely.
- Feed on demand. Expect him to eat about 30 to 32 oz daily.
- Hold your baby so you can look at each other when you feed him.
- Always hold the bottle. Never prop it.
- Don't give your baby a bottle while he is in a crib.

### ✓ YOUR CHANGING BABY

- Create routines for feeding, nap time, and bedtime.
- Calm your baby with soothing and gentle touches when she is fussy.
- Make time for quiet play.
  - Hold your baby and talk with her.
  - Read to your baby often.
- Encourage active play.
  - Offer floor gyms and colorful toys to hold.
  - Put your baby on her tummy for playtime. Don't leave her alone during tummy time or allow her to sleep on her tummy.
- Don't have a TV on in the background or use a TV or other digital media to calm your baby.

### ✓ HEALTHY TEETH

- Go to your own dentist twice yearly. It is important to keep your teeth healthy so you don't pass bacteria that cause cavities on to your baby.
- Don't share spoons with your baby or use your mouth to clean the baby's pacifier.
- Use a cold teething ring if your baby's gums are sore from teething.
- Don't put your baby in a crib with a bottle.
- Clean your baby's gums and teeth (as soon as you see the first tooth) 2 times per day with a soft cloth or soft toothbrush and a small smear of fluoride toothpaste (no more than a grain of rice).

#### Helpful Resources:

Information About Car Safety Seats: [www.safercar.gov/parents](http://www.safercar.gov/parents) | Toll-free Auto Safety Hotline: 888-327-4236

## 4 MONTH VISIT—PARENT

### SAFETY

- Use a rear-facing-only car safety seat in the back seat of all vehicles.
- Never put your baby in the front seat of a vehicle that has a passenger airbag.
- Your baby's safety depends on you. Always wear your lap and shoulder seat belt. Never drive after drinking alcohol or using drugs. Never text or use a cell phone while driving.
- Always put your baby to sleep on her back in her own crib, not in your bed.
  - Your baby should sleep in your room until she is at least 6 months of age.
  - Make sure your baby's crib or sleep surface meets the most recent safety guidelines.
  - Don't put soft objects and loose bedding such as blankets, pillows, bumper pads, and toys in the crib.
- Drop-side cribs should not be used.
- Lower the crib mattress.
- If you choose to use a mesh playpen, get one made after February 28, 2013.
- Prevent tap water burns. Set the water heater so the temperature at the faucet is at or below 120°F /49°C.
- Prevent scalds or burns. Don't drink hot drinks when holding your baby.
- Keep a hand on your baby on any surface from which she might fall and get hurt, such as a changing table, couch, or bed.
- Never leave your baby alone in bathwater, even in a bath seat or ring.
- Keep small objects, small toys, and latex balloons away from your baby.
- Don't use a baby walker.

## WHAT TO EXPECT AT YOUR BABY'S 6 MONTH VISIT

### We will talk about

- Caring for your baby, your family, and yourself
- Teaching and playing with your baby
- Brushing your baby's teeth
- Introducing solid food
- Keeping your baby safe at home, outside, and in the car

Consistent with *Bright Futures: Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents, 4th Edition*

For more information, go to <https://brightfutures.aap.org>.

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



The information contained in this handout should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances. Original handout included as part of the *Bright Futures Tool and Resource Kit, 2nd Edition*.

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# Your Baby at 4 Months



Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Age \_\_\_\_\_

Today's Date \_\_\_\_\_

Milestones matter! How your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves offers important clues about his or her development. Check the milestones your child has reached by 4 months. Take this with you and talk with your child's doctor at every well-child visit about the milestones your child has reached and what to expect next.

## What Most Babies Do by this Age:

### Social/Emotional

- Smiles spontaneously, especially at people
- Likes to play with people and might cry when playing stops
- Copies some movements and facial expressions, like smiling or frowning

### Language/Communication

- Begins to babble
- Babbles with expression and copies sounds he hears
- Cries in different ways to show hunger, pain, or being tired

### Cognitive (learning, thinking, problem-solving)

- Lets you know if she is happy or sad
- Responds to affection
- Reaches for toy with one hand
- Uses hands and eyes together, such as seeing a toy and reaching for it
- Follows moving things with eyes from side to side
- Watches faces closely
- Recognizes familiar people and things at a distance

### Movement/Physical Development

- Holds head steady, unsupported
- Pushes down on legs when feet are on a hard surface
- May be able to roll over from tummy to back
- Can hold a toy and shake it and swing at dangling toys
- Brings hands to mouth
- When lying on stomach, pushes up to elbows

## You Know Your Child Best.

Act early if you have concerns about the way your child plays, learns, speaks, acts, or moves, or if your child:

- Is missing milestones
- Doesn't watch things as they move
- Doesn't smile at people
- Can't hold head steady
- Doesn't coo or make sounds
- Doesn't bring things to mouth
- Doesn't push down with legs when feet are placed on a hard surface
- Has trouble moving one or both eyes in all directions

**Tell your child's doctor or nurse if you notice any of these signs of possible developmental delay and ask for a developmental screening.**

If you or the doctor is still concerned

1. Ask for a referral to a specialist and,
2. Call your state or territory's early intervention program to find out if your child can get services to help. Learn more and find the number at [cdc.gov/FindEI](http://cdc.gov/FindEI).

For more information, go to [cdc.gov/Concerned](http://cdc.gov/Concerned).

**DON'T WAIT.**  
Acting early can make a real difference!



[www.cdc.gov/ActEarly](http://www.cdc.gov/ActEarly)  
1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)



Download CDC's  
Milestone Tracker App



**Learn the Signs. Act Early.**

# Help Your Baby Learn and Grow

You can help your baby learn and grow. Talk, read, sing, and play together every day. Below are some activities to enjoy with your 4-month-old baby today.



## What You Can Do for Your 4-Month-Old:

- Hold and talk to your baby; smile and be cheerful while you do.
- Set steady routines for sleeping and feeding.
- Pay close attention to what your baby likes and doesn't like; you will know how best to meet his needs and what you can do to make your baby happy.
- Copy your baby's sounds.
- Act excited and smile when your baby makes sounds.
- Have quiet play times when you read or sing to your baby.
- Give age-appropriate toys to play with, such as rattles or colorful pictures.
- Play games such as peek-a-boo.
- Provide safe opportunities for your baby to reach for toys and explore his surroundings.
- Put toys near your baby so that she can reach for them or kick her feet.
- Put toys or rattles in your baby's hand and help him to hold them.
- Hold your baby upright with feet on the floor, and sing or talk to your baby as she "stands" with support.

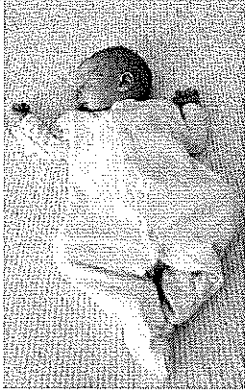
Milestones adapted from *CARING FOR YOUR BABY AND YOUNG CHILD: BIRTH TO AGE 5*, Fifth Edition, edited by Steven Shelov and Tanya Remer Altmann © 1991, 1993, 1998, 2004, 2009 by the American Academy of Pediatrics and *BRIGHT FUTURES: GUIDELINES FOR HEALTH SUPERVISION OF INFANTS, CHILDREN, AND ADOLESCENTS*, Third Edition, edited by Joseph Hagan, Jr., Judith S. Shaw, and Paula M. Duncan, 2008, Elk Grove Village, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics.

This milestone checklist is not a substitute for a standardized, validated developmental screening tool.

[www.cdc.gov/ActEarly](http://www.cdc.gov/ActEarly) | 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)



**Learn the Signs. Act Early.**



# Safe Sleep and Your Baby:

## How Parents Can Reduce the Risk of SIDS and Suffocation

About 3,500 babies die each year in the United States during sleep because of unsafe sleep environments.

Some of these deaths are caused by entrapment, suffocation, or strangulation. Some infants die of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). However, there are ways for parents to keep their sleeping baby safe.

Read on for more information from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) on how parents can create a safe sleep environment for their babies. This information should also be shared with anyone who cares for babies, including grandparents, family, friends, babysitters, and child care center staff.

**NOTE:** These recommendations are for healthy babies up to 1 year of age. A very small number of babies with certain medical conditions may need to be placed to sleep on their stomach. Your baby's doctor can tell you what is best for your baby.

### What You Can Do

#### • Place your baby to sleep on his back for every sleep.

- ° Babies up to 1 year of age should always be placed on their back to sleep during naps and at night. However, if your baby has rolled from his back to his side or stomach on his own, he can be left in that position if he is already able to roll from tummy to back and back to tummy.
- ° If your baby falls asleep in a car safety seat, stroller, swing, infant carrier, or infant sling, he should be moved to a firm sleep surface as soon as possible.
- ° Swaddling (wrapping a light blanket snugly around a baby) may help calm a crying baby. However, if you swaddle your baby before placing him on his back to sleep, stop swaddling him as soon as he starts trying to roll.

#### • Place your baby to sleep on a firm sleep surface.

- ° The crib, bassinet, portable crib, or play yard should meet current safety standards. Check to make sure the product has not been recalled. Do not use a crib that is broken or missing parts or that has drop-side rails. For more information about crib safety standards, visit the Consumer Product Safety Commission Web site at [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov).
- ° Cover the mattress with a fitted sheet.
- ° Do not put blankets or pillows between the mattress and fitted sheet.
- ° Never put your baby to sleep on an armchair, a sofa, a water bed, a cushion, or a sheepskin. (Parents should also make sure not to fall asleep on an armchair or a sofa while holding a baby.)

#### • Keep soft objects, loose bedding, or any objects that could increase the risk of entrapment, suffocation, or strangulation out of the crib.

- ° Pillows, quilts, comforters, sheepskins, bumper pads, and stuffed toys can cause your baby to suffocate.

**NOTE:** Research has not shown us when it's 100% safe to have these objects in the crib; however, most experts agree that these objects pose little risk to healthy babies after 12 months of age.

#### • Place your baby to sleep in the same room where you sleep but not the same bed.

- ° Keep the crib or bassinet within an arm's reach of your bed. You can easily watch or breastfeed your baby by having your baby nearby.
- ° The AAP cannot make a recommendation for or against the use of bedside sleepers or in-bed sleepers until more studies are done.
- ° Babies who sleep in the same bed as their parents are at risk of SIDS, suffocation, or strangulation. Parents can roll onto babies during sleep, or babies can get tangled in the sheets or blankets.

#### • Breastfeed as much and for as long as you can. This helps reduce the risk of SIDS.

- ° The AAP recommends breastfeeding as the sole source of nutrition for your baby for about 6 months. When you add solid foods to your baby's diet, continue breastfeeding until at least 12 months. You can continue to breastfeed after 12 months if you and your baby desire.

#### • Schedule and go to all well-child visits. Your baby will receive important immunizations.

- ° Recent evidence suggests that immunizations may have a protective effect against SIDS.

#### • Keep your baby away from smokers and places where people smoke. This helps reduce the risk of SIDS.

- ° If you smoke, try to quit. However, until you can quit, keep your car and home smoke-free. Don't smoke inside your home or car, and don't smoke anywhere near your baby, even if you are outside.

#### • Do not let your baby get too hot. This helps reduce the risk of SIDS.

- ° Keep the room where your baby sleeps at a comfortable temperature.
- ° In general, dress your baby in no more than one extra layer than you would wear. Your baby may be too hot if she is sweating or if her chest feels hot.
- ° If you are worried that your baby is cold, use a wearable blanket, such as a sleeping sack, or warm sleeper that is the right size for your baby. These are made to cover the body and not the head.

#### • Offer a pacifier at nap time and bedtime. This helps reduce the risk of SIDS.

- ° If you are breastfeeding, wait until breastfeeding is going well before offering a pacifier. This usually takes 3 to 4 weeks. If you are not breastfeeding, you can start a pacifier as soon as you like.

- ° It's OK if your baby doesn't want to use a pacifier. You can try offering a pacifier again, but some babies don't like to use pacifiers.
- ° If the pacifier falls out after your baby falls asleep, you don't have to put it back in.
- ° Do not use pacifiers that attach to infant clothing.
- ° Do not use pacifiers that are attached to objects, such as stuffed toys and other items that may be a suffocation or choking risk.
- **Do not use home cardiorespiratory monitors to help reduce the risk of SIDS.**
- ° Home cardiorespiratory monitors can be helpful for babies with breathing or heart problems, but they have not been found to reduce the risk of SIDS.
- **Use caution when using products that claim to reduce the risk of SIDS.**
- ° Products such as wedges, positioners, special mattresses, and specialized sleep surfaces have not been shown to reduce the risk of SIDS.

- ° Remember to hold your newborn skin to skin while breastfeeding. If you can, do this as soon as you can after birth. Skin-to-skin contact is also beneficial for bottle-fed newborns.

## Remember Tummy Time

Give your baby plenty of "tummy time" when she is awake. This will help strengthen neck muscles and help prevent flat spots on the head. Always stay with your baby during tummy time, and make sure she is awake.

## From Your Doctor

## What Expectant Moms Can Do

- ° Schedule and go to all prenatal doctor visits.
- ° Do not smoke, drink alcohol, or use drugs while pregnant or after the birth of your newborn. Stay away from smokers and places where people smoke.

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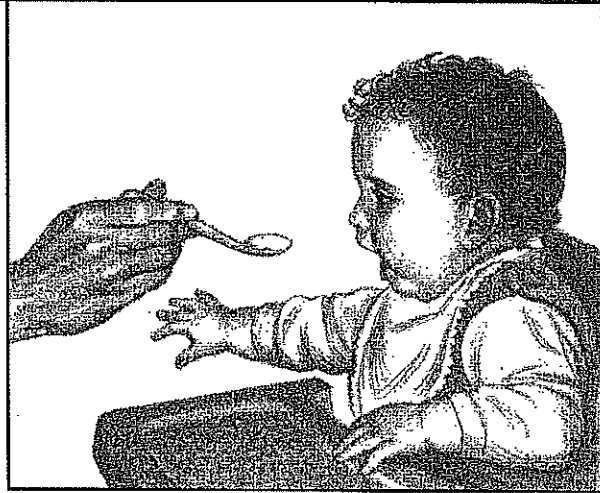
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# How to feed your older baby solid foods

How is feeding going?  
What do you like about feeding?  
What don't you like?  
Is there anything you would like to be different?  
What and how are you feeding your baby?



Your baby will eat solid foods best when he feels he has a say in the matter. It gives him a say when you wait to start solids until he can sit up. Then he can open his mouth and lean forward when he wants to eat and turn away and lean back when he doesn't. Let him touch his food and suck off his fingers, even if it makes a mess. That keeps him in control and lets him learn to feed himself.

Here is what to do—and not do—when you feed your older baby:

- **Have him sit up straight in a high chair, maybe propped up with pillows.**  
Don't have him leaning back or lying down. Don't let his neck be crooked.
- **Sit right in front of him. Hold the spoon about a foot away from his mouth.**  
Don't hold the spoon so close it feels pushy or so far away he can't see it well.
- **Wait for him to open his mouth. Put new food on his lip. Put familiar food in his mouth.**  
Don't pry his lips open with the spoon. Don't surprise him with new food.
- **Feed the way he wants to eat: little or much, fast or slow.**  
Don't make him hurry up or slow down. Don't take away the food before he is full.
- **Look at him. Talk to him kindly and quietly. Answer him.**  
Don't talk a lot, play, sing, watch TV. On the other hand, don't just sit there.
- **Stop when he shows he's done, even after a taste on his lip or only one bite.**  
Don't try to get him to eat more when he turns away, closes up or fusses.



## Parent Resources for Babies up to 1 year

There are so many resources available online for parents. Who do you trust? Here are some links approved by your pediatrician, and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>Healthy Children.org has a wealth of information for parents, including a Symptom checker, ideas for challenging your child to grow in development, and answers to questions about care of your child. <a href="https://www.healthychildren.org/English/Pages/default.aspx">https://www.healthychildren.org/English/Pages/default.aspx</a></p>   |    |
| <p>Care of Baby's Penis<br/><a href="https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/baby/bathing-skin-care/Pages/Caring-For-Your-Sons-Penis.aspx">https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/baby/bathing-skin-care/Pages/Caring-For-Your-Sons-Penis.aspx</a></p>   |    |
| <p>Post-Partum Depression - Speak Up When You're Down<br/><a href="https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/prenatal/delivery-beyond/Pages/Understanding-Motherhood-and-Mood-Baby-Blues-and-Beyond.aspx">https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/prenatal/delivery-beyond/Pages/Understanding-Motherhood-and-Mood-Baby-Blues-and-Beyond.aspx</a></p>                               |    |
| <p>When Your Child Needs Emergency Care – What to do?<br/><a href="https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/injuries-emergencies/Pages/When-Your-Child-Needs-Emergency-Medical-Services.aspx">https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/injuries-emergencies/Pages/When-Your-Child-Needs-Emergency-Medical-Services.aspx</a></p>   |   |
| <p>How and When to Introduce Solid Foods. The Baby-led Weaning website and pamphlet has helpful information on helping your baby move on to family meals.<br/><a href="http://www.rapleyweaning.com/assets/blwleaflet2.pdf">http://www.rapleyweaning.com/assets/blwleaflet2.pdf</a></p>   |  |
| <p>When does my baby need a new car seat? All the things you need to know about rear-facing car seats for infants and toddlers.<br/><a href="https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/on-the-go/Pages/Rear-Facing-Car-Seats-for-Infants-Toddlers.aspx">https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/on-the-go/Pages/Rear-Facing-Car-Seats-for-Infants-Toddlers.aspx</a></p> |  |
| <p>How do I safely take my baby for a bike ride? When are they old enough?<br/><a href="https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-play/Pages/Baby-On-Board-Keeping-Safe-On-A-Bike.aspx">https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-play/Pages/Baby-On-Board-Keeping-Safe-On-A-Bike.aspx</a></p>  |  |

If you don't have a QR code reader on your phone, try these:

Apple iPhone: Go to the App Store and search for "QR Reader". It's free; no ads.

Android: Go to Google Play Store and search for "QR Code Reader". It's free; no ads.



## Clark County Resources for Postpartum Depression

Contact your medical provider, and ask to speak with their advice nurse.

Clark County Crisis Hot Line – 800-626-8137

Perinatal Support – 888-404-7763

Maternity Support Services – 360-852-9092, 5411 E. Mill Plain Suite 28, Vancouver, Washington

Baby Blues Connection – 800-557-8375 for 24 hour information/message line for one-on-one phone support, support groups, information and resources. For ongoing email support, send a message to [support@babybluesconnection.org](mailto:support@babybluesconnection.org) . There is also a BBC support group on Facebook.

Children's Home Society – 360-835-7802

Parent Trust Help Line – 800-932-4673

Postpartum Rehabilitation/Support Services – 503-830-8995

Postpartum Support International – 800-944-4773

Speak Up When You're Down: PPD, support hotline – 888-404-7763

### Websites for Postpartum Depression:

[www.ppdmsupport.net](http://www.ppdmsupport.net)

[www.parenttrust.org](http://www.parenttrust.org)

[www.perinatalsupport.org](http://www.perinatalsupport.org)

[www.ppdsupportpage.com](http://www.ppdsupportpage.com)

[www.postpartumstress.com](http://www.postpartumstress.com)

[www.babybluesconnection.org](http://www.babybluesconnection.org)



## Cowlitz County Resources for Postpartum Depression

Contact your medical provider, and ask to speak with their advice nurse.

Cowlitz County Crisis Hot Line – 24 Hour Crisis Line: 1-800-803-8833 and/or 360-425-6064

Perinatal Support – 888-404-7763

Baby Blues Connection – 800-557-8375 for 24 hour information/message line for one-on-one phone support, support groups, information and resources. For ongoing email support, send a message to [support@babybluesconnection.org](mailto:support@babybluesconnection.org) . There is also a BBC support group on Facebook.

Parent Trust Help Line 800-932-4673

Postpartum Support International – 800-944-4773

Speak Up When You're Down: PPD, support hotline – 888-404-7763

### Websites for Postpartum Depression:

[www.ppdmsupport.net](http://www.ppdmsupport.net)

[www.parenttrust.org](http://www.parenttrust.org)

[www.perinataalsupport.org](http://www.perinataalsupport.org)

[www.ppdsupportpage.com](http://www.ppdsupportpage.com)

[www.postpartumstress.com](http://www.postpartumstress.com)

[www.babybluesconnection.org](http://www.babybluesconnection.org)

