

FOUR MONTH OLD CHECK-UP

DEVELOPMENT

Your baby may roll over now. She holds her head up and steady when held in a sitting position. She looks at an object in front of her and reaches for it maybe she will grasp it. She will hold a rattle and bring it to her mouth. She spends long minutes looking and touching her own hands. She turns when she hears voices. She will squeal, coo, laugh, babble, and get excited.

IMMUNIZATION

She will receive her second DTAP, Hib, IPV and pneumococcal vaccines. This will enable her body to develop an immunity to diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, polio, Haemophilus b and pneumococcal disease. If she develops a fever of 101°F (rectal) or higher, give one dose of fever medicine every 4-6 hours. You may put a cold cloth on her leg where she received her injection.

POISON AND ACCIDENT PREVENTION

Let the baby sit in the infant carrier only when it's safely on the floor. Keep a firm hand on the baby when she is in the tub. Pick up small things which the baby can swallow. These things include safety pins, buttons, coins, etc.

FEEDING AND NUTRITION

Solids are usually added between 4-6 months of age, preferably later. If your baby is satisfied and growing well, it is not necessary to start solids just now. If he is feeding more frequently or ingesting more than 40 oz. of formula per day, then you may want to begin solids.

When you do start feeding your baby solids, be sure to use a spoon. We feel there is no place for putting food in his bottle or for using an infant feeder. Your baby needs to learn the taste and feel of the solid food in his mouth - and how to swallow it. When you do give him those first bites from a spoon, he will try to push the food out of his mouth because eating solids requires different swallowing motions than does sucking on a nipple. Spitting food and letting it dribble from his mouth will continue for quite a while - just be patient and your baby will develop the ability to handle solids well. Remember, the ability to eat solids is a part of your baby's normal development. It is not something we teach him.

Try one new food at a time. Rice cereal is a good food to introduce first. Wait for 3 to 4 days before trying another solid. This gives you a chance to see if your baby tolerates this food. Keep a list of the foods as you introduce them so you can tell which food bothers your baby.

Some baby foods which are sold in the stores are not good for your baby. It is best to buy plain foods such as pears, squash, applesauce and bananas. Some mixed foods are less economical with regards to protein content and contain useless fillers. Some foods are more likely to cause reactions than others and are best withheld until 9 months of age. Examples are as follows: orange juice, egg white, wheat cereal, mixed cereal and strawberries.

DISCUSSION

Bowels - Bowel movements may change consistency and frequency with more solid foods. Green vegetables may give loose, green stools, while red vegetables may give red stools.

Sleeping - The baby may sleep through the night.

Play - At this age, baby is more fun to play with. Baby can entertain herself a short time. Put baby on her stomach on the floor and put bright toys (rattles, plastic cup, spoons, blocks) where the baby can see and reach for them. Prop your baby up to see what's going on in the room; play peek-a-boo.

Teething - Teething is a normal process. At worse, it may cause drooling, somewhat loose stools, mild irritability and low grade fever. Freezing the teething ring may help the gums: letting the child chew on it may relieve the discomfort. Tylenol may be used for pain (0.4cc) every 4-6 hours. Topical analgesics (Oragel, Numzit, etc.) have a short duration of action and may interfere with the baby's ability to swallow. Drooling and chewing alone does not mean teething. Many babies do this months before their teeth erupt.

If your child has a temperature greater than 101°F, severe diarrhea and extreme irritability, do not blame teething. There must be another cause.