

Norman Pediatric Associates  
Parent Handout 4 Month Visit

**Profile:** The 4-6 month –old has a definite personality. He/she is more active and better coordinated, can see better, and can pay more attention to his/her surroundings. Your baby looks forward to special events like feedings and playtime. He/she laughs, cries, and otherwise lets you know whether he/she is happy or not. The baby is good to take visiting and for staying with a sitter because he/she is good-natured and flexible and not afraid of strange people and places yet.

**Feeding/Nutrition:** Continue breast milk or formula with iron (no regular cow’s milk before one year of age). **If breastfeeding**, plan for pumping and storage of breast milk. **If formula feeding**, make sure to prepare, warm and store the formula properly. Let your baby take as much as he/she wants. Avoid feeding your baby too much by following the baby’s signs of fullness such as leaning back and/or turning away. Let your baby hold the bottle if he/she wants, but do not prop the bottle or lay your baby down with the bottle, and especially don’t let your baby go to sleep with a bottle. It can cause ear infections and it gives some children severe tooth decay. If you and your health care provider feel it is appropriate, start feeding your baby with rice cereal twice a day. It’s nutritious; it’s not expensive and it rarely causes an allergy. Buy the rice cereal in the box because it costs less and its iron is better absorbed than what you buy in the jar. Once your baby is taking cereal well, stage 1 foods can be introduced. Try only one new food at a time every 2 -3 days. Try vegetables before introducing fruits. By the time the baby is 6 months of age, most babies can have 3 meals a day of stage 1 foods that is well balanced with a combination of cereals, vegetables and fruits. Do not breastfeed or give formula directly after a meal. Start your baby on the sippy cup as soon as it starts to show interest. Your infant won’t do well with it at first, but he/she will learn fast. You can give water with the cup but no juices. Avoid honey until after your baby is 12 months old, because it is the leading cause of botulism poisoning in infants. Your baby, regardless if he/she is breastfeed or bottle feed, needs to be supplemented with Vitamin D, 400 IU, every day. You can give your baby the Vitamin D drops, obtainable from your local pharmacy. You can also give 0.5 ml of Poly-Vi-Sol daily to your infant.

**Sleep/Bedtime:** Life will be easier in the long run if your baby learns to separate eating from sleeping. Keep routines for feeding, nap time and bedtime. Try to spend some quiet time with the baby at bedtime: give a feeding at bedtime, but then lay the baby down on its back before it dozes off in a safe crib. If the baby wakes up at night and continues to fuss, go to your baby every 30 minutes or so. Change the baby if it needs it. Stay long enough to let the baby know his/her mother or father hasn’t abandoned him/her, but do not stay in the room. Do not feed your baby at night. If you allow your baby to cry at night, you can have him/her sleeping the entire night in 3 - 4 nights.

**Toys and Activities:** Toys to hold, feel, shake, and bite are good at this age- colored rattles, rubber squeeze things, balls, and soft snugly stuffed animals are good examples. A toy is not safe if it is small enough to fit through a toilet paper roll or if small pieces might come off.

**Baby care:** Your baby is now very active. Learn what things your baby likes and does not like. The infant can sit for a while propped up, but he/she is probably happiest when he/she is able to wave its arms and legs and wiggle. Let your baby move around in a safe playroom, in a playpen, or a blanket on the floor if you’re where you can watch your baby. Encourage play by offering mirrors, floor gyms and colorful toys to hold. Put your baby on its tummy when he/she is awake and you can watch. Promote quiet play by holding and talking with your baby. Talking starts with cooing. You should talk to your baby a lot because even though it’s going to be a long time

before your baby says any real words, it is learning to talk right now. The infant learns to talk from hearing other people talk.

**Safety:** Learn CPR.

Your child can now squirm and creep a bit (perhaps a lot), and will soon be rolling over. Never leave your baby alone on tabletops, changing tables, in the car, or in the tub (even in a bath seat ring). Keep crib sides up. It takes only seconds to fall or drown. Keep a hand on your baby when dressing or changing him/her. Keep plastic bags away from your baby. Don't trust young brothers or sisters to watch the baby. Well-meaning young children sometimes harm babies because they do not have good judgment. It is time to put gate guards in front of steps. Record emergency phone numbers on your telephones.

Crib: Use a crib with a firm mattress and slats close together- 2 3/8 inches apart or less. Do not use a crib with drop-side rails. Continue to not use blankets, pillows, stuffed toys, quilts/comforters, or bumper pads in the crib. Use a mesh playpen with weaves less than 1/4 inches apart.

Car: Protect your baby with a rear facing car seat restraint securely installed in the back seat. Be sure it is labeled certified or safety approved, so that it will adequately protect your infant. Not all carriers are equal. Never put your baby in the front seat of a vehicle with a passenger air bag. Always wear your seat belt and never drink and drive.

Smoking/Burns: If a member of the family smokes: STOP SMOKING – Ask us for help if you cannot stop smoking. A smoke free environment is important for infant's health. Make your home and car "No smoking zones". Do not hold hot drinks or a lit cigarette while holding your baby. Working smoke detectors and CO detectors with battery backup are recommended for family safety. Check the detectors monthly and change the batteries if you have not done so in the last year. Prevent burns by setting your hot water heater so the temperature at the faucet is 120°F or lower. Protect your child from sun exposure. It is extremely important to have a working fire extinguisher in your home.

**Teething/Oral Health:** Many babies cut their first tooth between 4 and 6 months of age, but some perfectly normal babies don't cut a tooth until they are over a year old. Babies this age drool a lot, whether they are teething or not. Use a cold teething ring if your baby has sore gums with teething.

**Parent and Family:** Take time for yourself and with your partner. Spend time alone with your other children. Encourage your partner to help care for your baby. Choose a mature, trained, and responsible babysitter or caregiver. Prepare an advanced authorization letter so your sitter can get medical care for your baby if needed (our office has a form designed specifically for this –please see the front desk if you would like a copy of this form). Get help if you and your partner are in conflict. Let us know. We can help.

**Immunizations:** Today your child received the Prevnar (Pneumococcal vaccine); Pentacel, which is combination vaccine that includes the DTaP (Diphtheria, Tetanus, & Pertussis), Hib (Haemophilus Influenza), and IPV (Inactivated Poliovirus) vaccines; and the Rotavirus vaccine (Rotarix). These are the same vaccines that were given at the 2 month visit. These immunizations may cause tenderness, redness, and swelling at the injection site. A small knot may develop and persist for 6-8 weeks. A warm moist cloth may be used at the injection site in the first 24 hours followed by a cool moist cloth as needed. There may be a slight fever, usually not higher than 100°. Treat the fever with acetaminophen (Tylenol) every 4 to 6 hours. Do not exceed 5 doses in a 24 hour period. In the event of a severe reaction (fever greater than 104°, inconsolable crying or listlessness) notify us.

Rev. 05-2013