

Caring for Your 4-Month-Old Baby

Keep Your Baby Safe

Name _____ Weight _____ Height _____ Date _____

Use a Car Seat

- Install it properly in the back seat facing backwards until your child is 20 pounds.

Use a Safe Crib

- Make sure the space between the slats is less than 2½ inches.
- Don't use a crib with sharp edges that your baby can hit.

Prevent Suffocation

- Place your baby on his back to sleep.
- A string can choke your baby. Keep strings and necklaces away from your baby.
- Some toys are small enough or have parts small enough that your baby could choke on them. Don't give your baby toys like these. Give him toys made for his age.

Prevent Injuries

- Don't leave your baby alone—ever. Use extra care when she is in water, near young children or pets, or on any surface that she can fall from.
- Don't use a walker that will let your baby move across the floor.
- Set the water heater thermostat so that the water is not hotter than 120°F.
- Make sure you have smoke detectors on your ceiling. Check twice a year to make sure they work.
- Keep your baby away from hot things (like cigarettes or an iron). Don't hold her when you are drinking something hot (like coffee).
- Protect your baby from sunburn.
- ***Never shake, toss or hit your baby.***

Provide Healthy Nutrition

- **Breast milk or infant formula is all your baby needs. A healthy baby does not need vitamins. We don't recommend solid food until 6 months of age. Juice once or twice a day is okay.**
- **Talk with your health care provider if your baby uses a "low iron" formula.**
- **Feed your baby every 2 to 4 hours. Keep nighttime feedings quiet and as short as possible.**
- **Don't prop a bottle in your baby's mouth. Don't put him in the crib with a bottle.**
- **Spitting up is normal. For less spit-up, burp frequently.**

Practice Healthy Parenting and Care-giving

Care for Yourself

- Sleep when your baby does.
- Make some time for yourself each week by letting someone else care for the baby.

Remember the Family

- Try to set aside special time for other important people in your life.
- Talk with your sex partner about birth control. Ask yourselves, "How many children can we care for?"

Encourage Healthy Development

- Smile at and gently touch your baby as much as possible.
- Create a schedule for your baby's day and try to keep to it.
- Excite your baby's sense of sight. Show her a sturdy, brightly colored picture book.
- Excite your baby's sense of touch. Let her touch objects with different textures (like soft, hard, glossy or furry).
- Excite your baby's sense of hearing. Talk and sing to her and give her objects that make noise (like a bell or rattle).
- Strengthen your baby and her coordination. Help her push up on her arms while on her belly; help her sit up in the corner of a couch; offer her something to pull on.
- **Never yell at your baby.** You can keep her safe by moving her or removing the object that makes you worried.

Deal with Crying

- When your baby cries, ask yourself, "Is my baby hungry? Does he want to be changed? Does he want to be held? Is he too stimulated (like from too much touch, noise or light)? Is he in pain (like from teething)? Does he have a fever?"
- Don't feed your baby every time he cries. Don't use a pacifier every time your baby cries. Use it when you think he needs to calm himself.
- Treat the pain of teething with non-prescription teething medicine applied to the gum or with acetaminophen or ibuprofen.

Sleep

- Place your baby on her back in the crib when she is drowsy but still awake.
- Your baby needs naps and a regular bedtime.
- Don't change your baby's diaper in the middle of the night unless she has pooped or has a rash.

Clean Your Baby

- If your baby boy is uncircumcised, don't try to pull back his foreskin.
- Don't bathe your baby every day. When you do, use warm water and mild baby soap.

Prevent Sickness

Identify It Early

- Keep your baby away from cigarette smoke. Do not smoke with the baby in the car; do not smoke in the home.
- Don't let someone touch your baby without first washing his hands.
- Call the clinic right away if your baby has a fever, is coughing a lot or may be dehydrated. A fever is a rectal temperature of 100.4°F or higher. A dehydrated baby has fewer than five wet diapers a day, cries without making tears, or has dry lips and a pasty mouth.

Your baby's next visit is when he is about 6-months-old. At this check-up he will receive his third set of immunizations (shots). Remember to bring your baby's shot record with you. Read the shot handouts given to you before the next visit. Bring acetaminophen or ibuprofen for infants with you to the next visit.