

mmpc pediatrics

4 MONTH CHECK

Weight _____ Height _____ Head Circumference _____

Immunizations:
DTaP (Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis)
HIB (Hemophilus Influenza type B)
IPV (inactivated Polio)
PCV (pneumococcus)

There is nothing more fun than watching a 4 month old baby discover and interact with his world. Everything is exciting and new and she responds to you with unfiltered and complete joy.

Development.

Laughing, smiling, and cooing should be quite common by now. She is starting to reach or bat at objects and bring them into her mouth. She examines and plays with her hands. Her vision is about the same as that of an adult and she can see across the room and track 180 degrees. She may be rolling to her side and starting to roll over as well (though some babies do not at this stage, so not to worry if your little one has not tried this yet). She is improving her head control and can raise it 90 degrees while on her tummy. To aid in her development, read to her and take turns with language, exploring with repetition. Try dangling a toy or rattle. Try her in an exersaucer a few times a day once her trunk is strong enough to support her. You may need an extra blanket or small pillow at first for added support in the seat.

Feedings:

Babies grow quite rapidly in the first 4 months and may have doubled his birth weight by now. As he becomes more interested in his environment, he may be easily distracted during feedings, so it may become necessary to find a quiet place to feed him (if such a place exists in your home).

Solid foods such as infant cereal and baby foods can be started between 4 and 6 months of age. There is no rush however, and we generally advise waiting until closer to 6 months. Babies get all the nutrition they need from formula or breast milk throughout the first year. Your baby will show you he is ready for solids by increasing the volume of formula or breast milk he's taking and by acting very interested in your food. The introduction of solids is primarily for practice, allowing her to experience different flavors and textures and getting her comfortable with using a spoon. When starting solids, we recommend a single grain infant cereal such as oatmeal or rice, once a day (usually evening works best for most parents). At this stage since this is not for nutrition, try the food after a bottle. To start, try mixing a few teaspoons of the cereal with formula, breast milk, or water. Initially, try making the cereal into a thin, soupy consistency. The volume does not matter and she may not want this initially, so be patient with her. If she thrusts her tongue out, pushing the spoon out or her mouth, she isn't quite ready and try it again in a week or two. When she is taking the cereal well this way, try thickening it up a little at a time to the consistency of apple sauce.

When she has tolerated cereal well once daily for a few weeks, you may add a second feeding which may be more cereal or baby food. As you introduce the other cereals (oatmeal and barley) and the baby foods, only introduce one new thing at a time, waiting 3-5 days between each new food. Start with number one baby foods, or pureed foods you make on your own, and generally vegetables go well first, followed by fruits. Remember that this is only for practice, so there is no need to race through the foods. If using jar foods, once you have worked through the number ones, you may work through the number two jars which are bigger and a bit thicker, and often involve a few different foods in combination. Another hint is to pour however much food you think she'll want into a bowl to serve it to her. If you dip the spoon into the jar itself, you shouldn't use that jar for another feeding. Watch for vomiting or a rash as a sign of allergy or intolerance, though allergic reactions are relatively uncommon. Again, do not stress if feedings are going slowly or your baby is not interested. Baby food is not important for nutrition...only practice.

Sleep:

Babies generally sleep about 11-14 hours total per day. Hopefully your baby is learning to get himself to sleep for night and naps. If he is having trouble with this, it may be time to let him cry himself to sleep. Put him down when he is happy, but drowsy. If he cries when you leave, wait 5-10 minutes, then go in and comfort him briefly without picking him up and leave again. Keep adding 5 minutes each time before going in until he falls asleep or morning comes. If you find that the crying escalates after you go in and comfort, you may try not going in at all and see how he does. This is not an easy process, but it will get him in the good habit of falling asleep on her own.

Teething:

Babies generally begin teething behaviors at about 4 months, even though they don't usually break their first teeth through until they are 6-7 months old. Teething behaviors include drooling, gnawing on hands, teething rings, and pretty much whatever they can get into their mouths. Sometimes there is some fussiness involved. Teething does not cause a significantly elevated temperature (above 101 deg F)

Safety:

Your babe is getting more and more able to grab onto small objects and since he is teething at this age, anything is fair game. So be sure not to leave small objects around on the floor or anywhere else he spends time. As always, do not leave him unattended on elevated surfaces since he could roll off, and check your smoke detector and carbon monoxide detector.

Tune in next visit when we'll talk BABY PROOFING as your babe begins to move around and investigate his world.