

PARENT INFORMATION SHEET FOR 4 MONTH-OLDS

VACCINES:

- * DTaP #2 – prevents diphtheria, tetanus (“Lock-jaw”), and pertussis (“Whooping Cough”). DTaP may cause fever and soreness; acetaminophen (Tylenol, Feverall, and store brands) may help.
- * Polio #2 – prevents polio, a serious viral illness that causes paralysis.
- * Hib #2 (haemophilus influenzae, type b) – prevents Hib bacteria, a germ that causes severe infections like meningitis, airway (throat) infections, blood infections (“sepsis”), and even ear infections.
- * PCV-13 #2 – prevents 13 types of pneumococcus bacteria, a germ that causes severe infections like meningitis, pneumonia, and blood infections, as well as more common ones like ear infections.
- * Rotavirus #2 – helps prevent rotavirus, a virus causing severe diarrhea. This vaccine currently is not required for day care or school but is highly recommended.

- * Most children do not get serious side effects from the vaccines. If side effects occur they are usually mild. Fever and discomfort are the most common side effects. Acetaminophen (Tylenol and other brands) can help. The rotavirus vaccine rarely may cause vomiting and diarrhea in the day or two after the vaccine. If you have concerns, please call us.

- * Household members living with infants are strongly encouraged to receive the flu and whooping cough vaccines. Please contact your primary care provider.

DEVELOPMENT and PARENTING TIPS:

Speech/language:

- * Infants will smile and laugh. Most will smile to get attention as well as respond to your smiles. Infants also start to vary their sounds to coo and babble. These are your rewards for all those sleepless nights!

Physical ability:

- * Infants of this age learn to roll over but sometimes have not mastered it completely.
- * Most babies now can lift their heads and shoulders up off the floor when lying on their stomachs.
- * Most will start to reach for objects such as toys.
- * Most can hold a rattle now.

Social/play:

- * Infants now like to play with their own hands and feet. Don't be surprised to see you baby sucking on fingers or toes!
- * Infants also like toys such as rattles, rings, and crib mobiles.
- * Infants of this age usually love human faces and will enjoy mirrors so they can see themselves.

Behavior:

- * Infants will develop better sleep habits when a routine is used. By four months of age many infants are starting to sleep more at night with less nighttime feeding. To help this process, make sure to take your baby off the breast or bottle BEFORE she is asleep and put her into the crib to fall asleep.
- * Put your baby to sleep awake or drowsy, on his back, and in a safe crib at the same time each day for naps and nighttime. Try not to have naps only in the car or stroller. Start trying to create a situation where your baby is able to fall asleep without needing help from you or a pacifier or other aid. Some books can help you to learn about babies' and children's sleep habits. We recommend *Solve Your Child's Sleep Problems* by Dr. Richard Ferber, *Healthy Sleep Habits, Happy Child* by Dr. Marc Weissbluth, and *Good Night, Sleep Tight* by Kim West.

NUTRITION and EATING BEHAVIORS:

- * Keep on breast milk or formula with iron until one year of age. Your child should be drinking about 24-32 ounces per day. Never put the bottle in the microwave. All breastfeeding babies and formula-fed babies who do not drink 32 ounces of formula per day should be given extra vitamin D. If you are not already doing this, please ask your provider for a prescription and instructions.
- * If you are still breastfeeding, that's great! Plan for pumping and storage of breast milk.
- * Most babies are ready for solid food by four to six months of age. Signs of being ready include sitting with support, opening the mouth for the spoon and showing interest in the foods you eat. Solid foods should only be fed using a spoon. (Use a small rubber-coated infant spoon). Do not add cereal or other baby food to the bottle unless told to do so by your baby's doctor or nurse.
- * Add new foods one at a time, every 2-4 days.
- * Do not give your baby regular cow's milk until one year of age.
- * Start with one feeding of solid food each day - expect a mess at first until your baby learns to eat off the spoon!
- * After six months of age, babies should have 2 - 3 meals each day. The diet should include cereal (with iron), fruits, vegetables and

meats. Meat is the best way for babies to get iron from foods they eat. Iron is critical for the development of your baby's brain and blood production.

SAFETY ISSUES:

- * Your baby can roll, or will be able to very soon; never leave him or her unattended on a couch, bed or changing table.
- * Do not use loose bedding or stuffed animals in the crib.
- * This is the time to make your home safe for an exploring baby. Your child will soon be able to move and get into everything. Medicines, cleaning supplies, small objects that can cause choking (pennies, paper clips, etc.), breakables, electric cords and sockets all look like toys to a baby. Ask for a safety checklist.
- * Prevent burns by setting your hot water heater to 120 degrees F or lower. Do not drink hot drinks while holding your baby.
- * Never leave your baby alone in bathwater, even in a bath seat or ring.
- * A car seat is required. The car seat must face the back of the car. The middle of the back seat is the best location.
- * Think about using a playpen for times when your baby cannot be held.
- * Rolling walkers are VERY DANGEROUS. They do not help a child learn to walk and should not be used.
- * Install a well-fitting safety gate at all stairways to which the child has access. Keep couches and beds away from window sills unless on the ground floor.
- * Four month-old babies should sleep on their backs in their own cribs to reduce the risk of SIDS (crib death).
- * No smoking in the house. We strongly encourage parents who smoke to try to quit. Even the smoke on your clothes, hair, and breath can affect your child's health and development. Ask us for information on how to quit.
- * Find out if your home has lead paint or lead hazards. Ask your baby's doctor or nurse if you have questions about this.

NEXT VISIT: 6 months of age for a check-up/physical and as needed for other problems, illnesses, and injuries

We will talk about solid foods, home and car safety, caring for your baby's teeth, and other topics. Think of at least three questions to ask us. Write down your questions and remember to bring them with you!!

WANT MORE INFORMATION?

The internet can be an excellent source of information on child health and development. Be sure that the websites you visit are reputable! If you have questions, please ask us.

Need help with breastfeeding?

Meet with a lactation consultant and other breastfeeding mothers at the Cambridge Health Alliance Breastfeeding Support Drop-in Program, located at 8 Camelia Avenue in the Cambridge Hospital driveway. Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10AM to 12PM. No appointment is necessary!

More information is available from these sources:

Zipmilk	www.zipmilk.org
Massachusetts WIC Nutrition Program	(800) 942-1007
La Leche League	(800) LA LECHE
Nursing Mothers' Council	(617) 244-5102
Massachusetts Breastfeeding Coalition	www.massbfc.org
International Lactation Consultant Association	www.ilca.org
National Women's Health Information Center	(800) 994-9662

Poisoning help: 1-800-222-1222

Child safety seat inspection: 1-866-SEATCHECK

Check out *Bright Futures* parent information from the American Academy of Pediatrics at:

<http://brightfutures.aap.org/pdfs/Other%203/A.Inf.PH.4month.pdf>

Check out *Healthy Children* parent information from the American Academy of Pediatrics at:

www.healthychildren.org/

Find more information and tools on our CHA website page for parent resources at:

[Http://www.challiance.org/Services/PediatricsResourcesforParents.aspx](http://www.challiance.org/Services/PediatricsResourcesforParents.aspx)

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