

CORINTH FAMILY MEDICINE & PEDIATRICS

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4 MONTH WELL EXAM

NUTRITION:

Most infants will want to breast feed every 2-4 hrs or formula feed every 3-4 hrs. at this age. Formula fed infants generally take 4-6 oz at a time and consume at total of 24-35 oz per 24 hrs. Do not prop the baby bottle or lay your infant to sleep with a bottle in his/her mouth. Do not give plain water or juice to infants under the age of 9 months. Most infants do not require the addition of solid food until 6 months of age. If your infant is not content with 35 oz of formula in a day or seems to be hungry even after breast feeds, it may be time to introduce baby food. Before starting solid food, your baby should be able to sit up with support and maintain good head control. We recommend starting with plain rice cereal, which can be mixed with formula, breast milk, or water. Begin with about 2 tablespoons dry and mix until the consistency of applesauce. Offer it with a spoon, not in the bottle. During the first few days as your infant learns to push food back with their tongue, often more comes back out then goes down! Offer the cereal once or twice a day. If additional baby foods are needed you can begin adding vegetable baby food. Only offer a new food once every 4-5 days so that you can tell if your infant has any food reactions. Vitamins and iron are added to all standard formulas so supplemental vitamins are not necessary. However, we recommend vitamin D and iron supplements for all breastfed infants. Use only tap water or nursery water fortified with fluoride for mixing formula. Notify physician if your home is on well water.

SLEEP:

Sleep patterns can vary immensely at this age. Most infants at this age are falling into a more predictable pattern and often will go a full 6-8hr stretch at night between feedings. Try to place your infant in their crib while awake, so he or she can learn to settle to sleep at bedtime. After 4 months of age, most infants get enough calories during the day, no longer requiring night time feedings. Start to decrease the volume of night feedings gradually. It often takes a concerted effort to break the *habit* of feeding at night. The safest sleep position for your baby for the first 6 months of life is to remain on their back. There should be NO loose bedding, blankets, stuffed animals, bumpers, positioners, or other objects in bed with your infant. Do not allow your baby to sleep with you or in your bed as there is serious risk for suffocation. You should lower the crib mattress as soon as your baby is able to sit up.

BLADDER AND BOWEL FUNCTION:

Bowel patterns can vary from 4-6 stools per day to one every 5 days. If your infant begins to have hard stools ("pebbles" or consistency harder than peanut butter) then you can add either a 4 oz bottle of 50% baby apple (or prune) juice and 50% water or 1-2 teaspoons dark Kayro syrup in 4 oz water once per day. An infant should never go more than 8 hrs without a wet diaper.

DEVELOPMENT:

At 4 months, infants are now more socially interactive and responsive with you and others. Your infant should be smiling, cooing, squealing, pushing up off their chest when laying on their tummy, attempting to roll over, batting at objects with their hands, and following your movements or a mobile with their eyes. Often they are beginning to "blow bubbles" and develop a fake cough or growl as well. Offer age-appropriate toys, and help your child explore new objects and textures. Continue doing supervised tummy time daily while your baby is wide awake.

SAFETY:

- Always use an approved, rear-facing infant car seat. NEVER ride in the car with a child on your lap or otherwise not properly buckled into a car seat. Parents should always wear their seat belts.
- Do not leave your infant unattended on a bed, couch, changing table, etc. Although, your child is not purposefully mobile at this age, he/she can scoot and squirm causing risk of fall. Likewise do not leave your infant in a carrier or any other device seated above floor level because infants can wiggle and cause the car seat or carrier to fall.
- Make sure the smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors are operational in your home.
- NEVER shake a baby. Irreversible brain damage can occur to infants and toddlers whom are shaken.
- Never leave your baby alone with a young sibling or a pet.
- Be sure to keep your infant out of direct sunlight; we do not recommend sunscreen under the age of 6 months. Do not allow your baby to overheat while outdoors or in a car as they are unable to sweat at this age.
- All parents and caregivers should learn infant CPR.
- Second-hand smoke exposure is very dangerous for your child. Do not smoke around your baby, in your home or car.