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## OWNER'S GUIDE for the 4 MONTH OLD

### **FEEDING:**

Breast milk or formula should be the number one source of nutrition until 12 months of age. Waiting until 6 months of age to feed solid foods is preferred, but some babies need to be fed rice cereal at bedtime to give them enough bulk to be able to sleep through the night. Please do not feed cow or goat milk. Infants may still be feeding every 2-3 hours during the day, but hopefully sleeping longer stretches at night. Small amounts of water may be offered to the baby between feedings, but this is not necessary for any nutritional reason. Continue Vitamin D if the baby is breastfeeding. Do **not** put the baby to bed with a bottle!

### **SLEEPING:**

At four months of age, babies hopefully are sleeping through the night—at least 5 hours without needing to be fed. They usually take two naps during the day. Babies should sleep in their own beds. They should learn to fall asleep on their own without needing a bottle or needing to be rocked. Some babies need to cry for 10-15 minutes before they fall asleep and this is normal. They will not suffer any feelings of abandonment. Establish a consistent bedtime routine so the baby will know what to expect. Babies who are well fed during the day should not be fed or brought to the parents' bed if they awaken during the night. If he/she does not fall asleep again without intervention, sooth and comfort the baby with the lights dim or off and refrain from stimulating the baby, but only if absolutely necessary. Do **not** retrain the baby to awaken for feedings at night!

### **DEVELOPMENT:**

This is an exciting age and the baby undergoes many changes during this time. Babies are now more alert, active and inquisitive. They laugh and squeal, enjoy bright-colored, graspable toys, and like to be in a sitting position. They love to socialize! Parents are still their favorite “toys” and your appropriate response to their cues is not only important for their normal growth and

development, but also extremely rewarding. Try to create and maintain consistent schedules without being militant. Babies often roll over at this time, but they do not have to roll over to be normal developmentally. **REMEMBER**, what is normal for one child may not be normal for another. **AVOID THE TEMPTATION** to compare your baby with someone else's baby. Growth and development are evaluated individually at regular check-ups. Change the baby's positions frequently (crib, playpen, swing, walker, infant seat, etc.) Allow the baby to play on his/her tummy to strengthen his/her shoulder girdle at least 20-30 minutes a day or longer if he/she is content.

### **SAFETY:**

*Cars:* Always use a car seat! The baby must still be in the back seat and rear facing until one year of age and possibly until 2 years of age.

*Falls:* Never leave the baby unattended. The chance that he/she could roll off of a changing table or a counter is very high.

*Burns:* Keep the baby away from hot liquids and continue to check the bath water temperature with your elbow.

*Toys:* Keep any small objects that could cause choking away from the baby. Toys should still be too large to swallow, too tough to break, no sharp edges or points, no long cords and no jewelry or pacifiers around the neck.

*Smothering:* Even though the baby has better control of his/her airway, plastic bags, soft pillows and plush animals should still be kept away from him/her. Do not allow the baby to suck on balloons.

### **COMMON WORRIES:**

*Teething:* Symptoms that are associated with teething, such as drooling, gnawing on toys or fists and elevation of temperature (no more than 100.5 degrees rectally) often begin around four months of age. Do not be discouraged if teeth do not erupt immediately. As long as at least two teeth erupt by 14 months of age, there is no concern. However, teething *symptoms* may persist for several months.

*Illnesses:* With more exposure to people and contagious illnesses, babies may experience their first colds and/or ear infections. If you are breastfeeding, you have also been exposed to any viruses or bacteria to which your baby has been exposed and your immune system produces

antibodies that move passively through the breast milk to the baby, offering immunological protection not available from any other source. Please do **not** stop breastfeeding if you are ill. If you are taking any medications, check with us to see if those medications are compatible with breastfeeding. A normal infant with a normal immune system can have an average of 8-10 illnesses per year. The same infant in day care can have an average of 12-14 illnesses per year. **REMEMBER**, antibiotics do not cure viral infections. They treat bacterial infections. If the baby sounds “congested” but you cannot retrieve any mucous from the nose, the mucous is still in the tissue surrounding the nostrils. Use 1-2 drops of a commercial normal saline nose drop in each nostril, wait 5-6 minutes and then suction with the bulb syringe. Both cool mist humidifiers and warm vaporizers are equally effective for symptom relief. Pediatricians often recommend humidifiers to prevent the potential for burns by vaporizers. Having a mild upper respiratory infection does not preclude giving immunizations.

#### **HEALTH CARE:**

Routine well child appointments and immunizations are:

2 MONTHS OF AGE: DTaP, IPV, Hep B, PCV 13, Hib, Rotavirus

4 MONTHS OF AGE: DTaP, IPV, Hep B, PCV 13, Hib, Rotavirus

6 MONTHS OF AGE: DTaP, IPV, Hep B, Hib

9 MONTHS OF AGE: Hematocrit

12 MONTHS OF AGE: Varicella, MMR, PCV 13, Hep A and if attending a licensed day care- Hib

15 MONTHS OF AGE: DTaP, Hib if not given at 12 months of age

18 MONTHS OF AGE: Hep A

24 MONTHS OF AGE: Update any vaccine deficits

3 YEARS OF AGE: Update any vaccine deficits

4 YEARS OF AGE: DTaP, IPV, MMR, Varicella

5 YEARS OF AGE: Update any vaccine deficits

6 YEARS OF AGE: Update any vaccine deficits

7 YEARS OF AGE: Update any vaccine deficits

8 YEARS OF AGE: Update any vaccine deficits

9 YEARS OF AGE: Update any vaccine deficits

10-11 YEARS OF AGE: Tdap, MCV4, HPV, update any vaccine deficits

12-15 YEARS OF AGE: Update any vaccine deficits

16-18 YEARS OF AGE: MCV4, Men B (Men B booster one month later)

#### **WHEN TO CALL THE PEDIATRICIAN:**

1. Baby has a rectal temperature of 101 degrees rectally or greater for more than 3 days which does not respond to Acetaminophen.

2. Baby has specific signs and/or symptoms of illness.
3. Baby is extremely lethargic, feeding poorly or is unusually irritable.
4. Baby has green tinted watery foul smelling stools more frequently than usual' significantly fewer wet diapers than usual.
5. ***Parent is uncomfortable and/or worried.***

If you are dealing with a life-threatening emergency, CALL 911. Otherwise, call our office phone number ***first*** and our voice message will provide detailed instructions on how to obtain medical care for your child when our office is closed. ***(775) 329-5555***