

your child @[™]

4 to 6 months

highlights of what's happening at this stage of your child's development ...

Watch your baby coo, wiggle, kick, roll over, and try to sit up all by herself.

Your child's health

The Well Visit

At the 4-month visit, your doctor will give vaccinations that will keep your child healthy. Remember to schedule your next visit for when your baby is 6 months old.



Let your doctor know if your baby:

- Does not respond to loud noises.
- Does not reach for or hold toys.
- Does not coo or try to copy your sounds.
- Has trouble following objects with her eyes.

Nutrition

At this age, your baby only needs breast milk or formula. But you can start giving cereals, such as rice or oatmeal, at around 4 to 6 months. Here are tips for starting with solid foods:

- Mix simple solids (like rice cereal) with breast milk or formula.
- Start with 1 feeding of solids a day. Add another when your baby can eat 2 to 3 tablespoons at a feeding.
- When your baby is used to eating cereal, move on to smooth, single-ingredient foods (like smooth carrots or applesauce, or "stage 1" jars of baby food).
- Wait for 2 to 3 days before starting a new food to make sure your baby is not allergic. Call your doctor if you think your child has had a reaction.

Sleep

Your baby should sleep about 15 hours per day and may take 2 or 3 daytime naps. He may be getting up 2 times each night to eat. To help your baby sleep:

- Put him to bed between 6 and 8 pm every night.
- Start a bedtime routine. Give him a bath, sing a song, read a book, hug or rock him, and then put him to sleep.

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Your child's health, continued

Sleep Safety

- Always put your baby to sleep on his back (do not worry if he rolls over on his own).
- Put the mattress at its lowest level, if your baby can sit up.
- Don't put stuffed animals, pillows, or blankets in the crib with your baby.
- Keep your baby's room at a comfortable temperature. Do not make it too warm or too cold.

Nurturing your child

Behavior

Discipline is never right for babies this age. Always check on your baby when she cries. You can't spoil your baby.

Early Learning

Help your baby learn by reading, talking, and playing.

- Play with your baby. Use toys your baby can chew on, such as rattles and teething rings.
- Place your baby on his tummy for several minutes, a few times a day to help build his strength.
- Give him cloth or board books to play with. Read to him every day.
- Talk and sing to him all the time. Look at him and listen for him to coo or squeal back at you.

Safety Tip

Never shake or hit your baby. Shaking can cause brain damage.

Your child's safety

Around the House

- Never leave your baby on a bed, couch, or chair. She could roll off and get hurt.
- Do not drink or carry hot liquids when you are holding your child or are near children.
- Always check the water temperature in the bath. Never leave your baby alone near water.



In the Car

By law, your baby must ride in a secure, rear-facing car seat. He must ride in the back seat of your car.

United Way Born Learning[®] is a public engagement campaign helping parents, caregivers and communities create early learning opportunities for young children. Designed to support you in your critical role as a child's first teacher, Born Learning educational materials are made available through the efforts of United Way. For more information, visit us online at www.bornlearning.org.

This tool was adapted for the United Way Born Learning campaign.

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