

INFANT CARE FROM AGE 4 TO 6 MONTHS

www.northfultonpediatrics.com

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SUGGESTED DIET:

Your infant is still on breast milk or iron-fortified formula (or a combination of both). Breast feed babies will probably nurse every two to four hours while awake. For babies on formula, intake should be approximately 26 - 32 ounces each 24 hours, including what is used for cereal. You may begin introducing solid foods between now and the six-month visit, if your infant seems ready. Your baby's appetite and acceptance of new foods will vary, so use these instructions as a guide rather than as a hard and fast rule. All breast fed infants need to take a vitamin D supplement daily unless they are taking more than 17 oz. of formula per day. We recommend D-Vi-Sol, 1 ml by mouth once a day.

4 - 6 MONTH OLD: There is no rush to introduce food before 6 months, but if your baby is interested you may start as follows:

Rice Cereal: Mix 1 - 2 tablespoons of formula or breast milk with each tablespoon of dry cereal until it becomes a thin soup. Increase the thickness as tolerated without spitting or gagging. Start with 1 tablespoon a day and build up to 5-6 tablespoons twice a day. When the first meal is going fairly well, you may introduce the second meal.

5 - 6 MONTHS OLD:

Cereal: Up to 3 - 4 tablespoons two times a day. You may use barley or oats. As your baby becomes more proficient at eating, gradually increase the thickness of the cereal.

Fruit/Vegetables: Up to 4 - 5 tablespoons twice a day. Try the "first foods" (Stage 1) in the baby food jars. Strained applesauce, pears, bananas, peaches, plums and apricots are all good choices. You may also introduce vegetables, alternating green and yellow ones.

FEEDING TIPS:

- Breast milk or iron-fortified formula remain your infant's most important source of good nutrition and calories.
- Your infant should learn to eat from a spoon. This helps with coordination and development.
- Juice is not recommended.
- Introduce only one new food every 3 - 7 days. Watch for a rash, vomiting, or diarrhea as a reaction to the new food. If one of these occurs, stop the new food and wait at least one week before trying it again. Do not use mixed cereals or fruits until you have tried each ingredient separately.
- Babies often act as though they do not like new foods and may spit them out. This is their reaction to new textures. Do not give up, it just takes patience.

SLEEPING

Your infant will continue to increase their amount of night time sleep at this age. Most babies sleep 6 to 8 hours at night, uninterrupted. Continue the bedtime routine to encourage sleep. Consistently place your baby in the crib to fall asleep. If your baby awakens at night and cries out, check on safety and comfort and put your baby back to sleep. Do not encourage nighttime feeding or playtime. Infants also begin to adapt a little more to the family routine and often decrease sleeping time during the day to a morning nap and/or an afternoon nap.

ELIMINATION

Previous patterns will continue but with the addition of solid foods, stools may change in appearance. Breast fed infants' bowel movements will be firmer when solid foods are added to their diets. Green vegetables may give a green color to the stool.

DEVELOPMENT/PLAY

Your baby can or soon will be able to: roll over, hold his head steady when held upright, squeal, coo, babble and get excited, discover his hands and bring objects to the mouth. Your infant is also now starting to distinguish you from strangers.

At this age, your infant more actively engages in play with you. He can entertain himself for short periods. Encourage this independence; put him on the floor on his abdomen with soft, textured, bright-colored toys to try to reach and grasp. Put him in his infant seat, swing, or walk with your baby in a stroller to give him exposure to new sights, sounds, and motions. When you place him in front of a mirror, you open a whole new area of entertainment for your baby. Continue to talk and sing to your baby. Respond enthusiastically to his coos and babbles.

The American Academy of Pediatrics strongly recommends protecting the developing brains of children younger than 2 years of age by avoiding screen media (TV/computer/video) altogether. This includes educational material that comes in these forms.

SAFETY

Since your baby is becoming more active, burns can be a danger. Do not walk with hot foods or liquids while carrying your infant as this is a common cause of burns. Do not leave your baby unattended on a table, counter, bed, or the bathtub, where they could fall. Keep all small objects out of your infant's reach. Small objects are choking hazards. Always use an approved car seat. All infants and toddlers should ride in a rear-facing car safety seat in the backseat until they are 2 years old. (www.nhtsa.gov/Safety/CPS)

FEVER MANAGEMENT

Fever is a symptom, not a disease. The fever itself is the body's normal response to infections and helps your child fight them. We are not worried about the height of the fever but about your child's symptoms. **Call us if your child has lethargy, difficulty breathing, inconsolable crying.**

You may treat your child's fever with: Tylenol (Active ingredient is acetaminophen)

Your child's next well childcare visit should be at 6 months of age.

Additional Resources for Parents

Visit our web site at www.northfultonpediatrics.com

Caring For Your Baby And Young Child, Birth to Age 5, by The American Academy of Pediatrics

www.healthychildren.org

www.chop.edu/service/vaccine

www.aap.org/bookstore

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