

# FOUR MONTHS

## OUR LITTLE SUNSHINE

**2 SHOTS TODAY:** against pneumococcus- a cause of meningitis, sepsis, and ear infections and hepatitis B (liver virus), diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough.

**FEEDING:** We'd like you to introduce solids as soon as your baby seems interested. Notice if they mimic your chewing type movements or grab for your spoon when you are eating. Cereal is typically mixed with breast milk or formula at first. Baby needs to learn a different kind of swallowing. Be patient, they won't immediately realize the difference between spitting it out and swallowing it down. Use a soft spoon and be ready for a mess! Avoid the urge to let baby suck in all food like the squeeze food pouches too readily available. We encourage you to **AVOID** processed finger foods and food pouches. Many like to process their own baby foods, but storage and spoilage is a tricky issue, and most jar baby food is quite pure (read the label). Start with vegetables (stage 1) and quickly advance to stage 2 once swallowing is going well. Fruit next. Avoid chunks that could choke baby. Watch the baby's signal that they are full...turning their head away or leaning back away from the spoon.

**WEANING:** Some mothers who are going back to work worry about nursing while being away all day. Some pump at the workplace, and many feed just before and after work. Do what feels right for you; your body can adjust usually within a week or two. **PACIFIER:** A pacifier is a great way to calm your baby down without giving them the breast.

**BM:** Different foods may cause different-looking stools. Formulas are famous for making interesting smells and colors. Extra water can encourage looser stools as does grape or prune juice. Avoid juices with high fructose corn syrup (read the label). Many babies need juice diluted a little at first. Do not stick anything up the baby's bottom. Also avoid over the counter gas medications, they cause more problems than they solve, talk to us if it's an issue.

**CRYING:** Quickly responding to your baby's cries helps build trust and security. Reacting dependably means your baby should cry for a shorter time. At this age there is no such thing as spoiling. [If you wait until the baby's cries get louder the baby learns to cry louder sooner]. If you are overwhelmed it's ok for you to cry! Maybe parenthood has turned you into a feeding, burping and poop-cleaning robot. You will be forced to rearrange your priorities and lifestyle. Embrace the uniqueness of this time, it will quickly change. Dad: have you offered to give up your night out with the boys or to help with a midnight feed or drawn the line at work about some of the late hours you've been working? The sacrifices you make will be universally understood as your desire to be an awesome dad.

**ROUTINES:** Once you find a routine that works pretty well I highly encourage sticking to that throughout transitions with other caretakers, illnesses, weekends and other interruptions of everyday activities. Write the schedule down. Some babies are extremely intolerant of change while others are more adaptable. If yours is the former it's even more important to find what works well and stick to it when you can. Illnesses and visitors can break

up this routine so don't forget that schedules are servants not masters.

**DADS:** The mother of your beautiful child is finally getting some sleep and learning routines that give her some peace of mind. Please support her. Give her the gift of time to build her confidence in your parenting and luxuriate in a much-needed break from time to time. It won't feel natural right away but men who take the time with their babies become uniquely bonded and in turn those children are more confident and adjusted throughout their entire life. Men, be the leader of your home... have a good support system. Explore the faith you grew up with or something that moves you. We encourage time in prayer on regular basis... nurture your own divine!



**BEDTIME:** Routines help babies. Quiet activities, a bath, reading aloud with dimmed lights, breast or bottle feed [BUT avoid “propping” a bottle for baby to finish on their own (a choking hazard)] and make it a habit to bring the bottle out of the room afterwards. Having your baby sleep in their own room might be a battle at this age and is one of the few times we can ignore baby’s cries. If your baby is safe, fed and dry, a little fussing before falling asleep can be ignored.

**COLDS:** Babies get an average of 10 illnesses annually. So, if in the summer baby is fine, we might get a cold every other week in the cold weather! Most illnesses will just be viral and a nasal syringe, extra fluids and an occasional liquid acetaminophen is all your baby needs. Avoid over the counter cold remedies or decongestants. They just are not safe at this age. A lot of drooling might be “pre-teething.” Reasons to bring your baby in to the doctor include: acting “not themselves”, fussy, not eating, or temp over 101°F for over a day. If you are concerned, make an appointment. Some babies barely fuss with bad ear infections while others run higher temperatures acting miserable for only minor viral infections. It takes time and experience to see when your baby signals trouble.

#### **PARENTING DECISIONS:**

Most of us started out as great idealists. As we get experienced most of us get more practical. Spouses might fight (call it negotiation) over the right way to do things. Your grandparents might have still different ideas. There is a lot of direct marketing to parents not to mention the Internet. If you have questions about how to do something, please discuss that so we can show you the pros and cons of each choice.

**MOTOR development:** expect your baby to be swatting at toys while on their back (mobiles)/ moving side to back/ lifting head/ looking for you/ sleeping less. Get outside with a stroller! Fresh air is good!

**HOW I GROW AND TALK:** My head is still wobbly, I can hold my head up when on my stomach, I cry with tears, I move arms and legs in bicycle movement when excited, I gurgle, laugh and smile when happy, I try out cooing sounds and imitating sounds so help me with a slow clear voice, reading to me and repeating things

**HEAD SHAPES:** A flat area on the back of the head is called plagiocephaly. This is caused by baby spending too much time on their back and moving around too little. Sometimes a tight neck muscle prevents baby from moving around more, so we can check that at your visit. Generally this is a harmless condition that resolves over several months (sometimes years) and causes no harm to the brain. It is rare to need the helmets that are so vigorously marketed these days.

**SAFETY:** when baby is on the bed beware of the day when baby can roll off the bed! Be careful about hot beverages in your hand that baby might grab. Walkers can get a baby into trouble and do not encourage good balance and foot positions. Huge winter coats must be removed prior to putting baby in the car seat! Baby can fly out of the coat when it is not snug enough. You can lay a coat or blanket on top of baby to keep baby warm.

**MOTHER’S HEALTH:** Make sure you take time to relax and exercise/ eat healthy/ take time for yourself/ have someone watch baby. What makes you happier and more enthusiastic is bound to make you a better parent. Be kind. Take a parenting break. If you feel you might harm your baby: put the baby down in a safe place and call somebody to talk to for help. Shouts of anger and slapping are never right for your baby or you.

**WHEN TO CALL US:** if your baby is in:

**PAIN:** scream, head rolling. Pull up legs/ different cry/ cries when touched

**POOR APPETITE:** none, little or persistent vomiting

**BREATHING:** is difficult, fast, slow, cough, wheeze

**SKIN:** is flushed, sweaty, pale, rash, ear drainage

**BOWELS:** watery, slimy, hard, no urine in 6 hours

**MOOD:** too quiet or too fussy, a change in eating or sleeping pattern that you can’t explain

**NEXT DOCTOR VISIT:** 6 months of age.

**QUESTIONS:**

TSG/TRG 2017

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