

# your child @<sup>TM</sup>

## 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.

Made possible through the generous support of the **A.L. Mailman Family Foundation.**

Sources: *Your Baby's First Year* and *Caring for Your Baby and Young Child*, American Academy of Pediatrics, Steven P. Shelov, MD, FAAP, editor in chief; *Understanding Children*, Civitas and Richard Saul Wurman; *KidBasics*, Civitas; *Healthy Sleep, Happy Child*, Marc Weissbluth, MD.

Civitas thanks **Parents as Teachers**, an international early childhood parent education and family support program, for their ongoing support.

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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.

*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, United Way Success By 6 and Civitas. For more information, visit us online at [www.bornlearning.org](http://www.bornlearning.org).

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