



# Bright Futures Parent Handout 4 Month Visit

Here are some suggestions from Bright Futures experts that may be of value to your family.

## How Your Family Is Doing

- Take time for yourself.
- Take time together with your partner.
- Spend time alone with your other children.
- Encourage your partner to help care for your baby.
- Choose a mature, trained, and responsible babysitter or caregiver.
- You can talk with us about your child care choices.
- Hold, cuddle, talk to, and sing to your baby each day.
- Massaging your infant may help your baby go to sleep more easily.
- Get help if you and your partner are in conflict. Let us know. We can help.

FAMILY FUNCTIONING

## Feeding Your Baby

- Feed only breast milk or iron-fortified formula in the first 4–6 months.

### If Breastfeeding

- If you are still breastfeeding, that's great!
- Plan for pumping and storage of breast milk.

### If Formula Feeding

- Make sure to prepare, heat, and store the formula safely.
- Hold your baby so you can look at each other while feeding.
- Do not prop the bottle.
- Do not give your baby a bottle in the crib.

### Solid Food

- You may begin to feed your baby solid food when your baby is ready.
- Some of the signs your baby is ready for solids
  - Opens mouth for the spoon.
  - Sits with support.
  - Good head and neck control.
  - Interest in foods you eat.
- Avoid foods that cause allergy—peanuts, tree nuts, fish, and shellfish.
- Avoid feeding your baby too much by following the baby's signs of fullness

NUTRITIONAL ADEQUACY AND GROWTH

NUTRITION

## Safety

- Leaning back
- Turning away
- Ask us about programs like WIC that can help get food for you if you are breastfeeding and formula for your baby if you are formula feeding.
- Use a rear-facing car safety seat in the back seat in all vehicles.
- Always wear a seat belt and never drive after using alcohol or drugs.
- Keep small objects and plastic bags away from your baby.
- Keep a hand on your baby on any high surface from which she can fall and be hurt.
- Prevent burns by setting your water heater so the temperature at the faucet is 120°F or lower.
- Do not drink hot drinks when holding your baby.
- Never leave your baby alone in bathwater, even in a bath seat or ring.
- The kitchen is the most dangerous room. Don't let your baby crawl around there; use a playpen or high chair instead.
- Do not use a baby walker.

SAFETY

## Your Changing Baby

- Keep routines for feeding, nap time, and bedtime.

### Crib/Playpen

- Put your baby to sleep on her back.
- In a crib that meets current safety standards, with no drop-side rail and slats no more than 2<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches apart. Find more information on the Consumer Product Safety Commission Web site at [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov).
- If your crib has a drop-side rail, keep it up and locked at all times. Contact the crib company to see if there is a device to keep the drop-side rail from falling down.

INFANT DEVELOPMENT

INFANT DEVELOPMENT

ORAL HEALTH

- Keep soft objects and loose bedding such as comforters, pillows, bumper pads, and toys out of the crib.
- Lower your baby's mattress.
- If using a mesh playpen, make sure the openings are less than 1/4 inch apart.

### Playtime

- Learn what things your baby likes and does not like.
- Encourage active play.
  - Offer mirrors, floor gyms, and colorful toys to hold.
  - Tummy time—put your baby on his tummy when awake and you can watch.
- Promote quiet play.
  - Hold and talk with your baby.
  - Read to your baby often.

### Crying

- Give your baby a pacifier or his fingers or thumb to suck when crying.

## Healthy Teeth

- Go to your own dentist twice yearly. It is important to keep your teeth healthy so that you don't pass bacteria that causes tooth decay on to your baby.
- Do not share spoons or cups with your baby or use your mouth to clean the baby's pacifier.
- Use a cold teething ring if your baby has sore gums with teething.

## What to Expect at Your Baby's 6 Month Visit

### We will talk about

- Introducing solid food
- Getting help with your baby
- Home and car safety
- Brushing your baby's teeth
- Reading to and teaching your baby

Poison Help: 1-800-222-1222

Child safety seat inspection:  
1-866-SEATCHECK; [seatcheck.org](http://seatcheck.org)



## American Academy of Pediatrics



DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™

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# Introducing Solid Foods

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## When should I start giving my baby solid foods?

- Breastfeeding is a complete source of nutrition for the first 6 months of life. Our practice recommends exclusive breastfeeding for as long as possible during the first year of life. Many parents introduce formula feedings in the early months as well. Introducing pureed baby food helps babies to learn to enjoy new tastes and textures and is fun!
- Between **4 and 6 months** most babies are ready to start solids. We do not recommend starting prior to age 4 months. Signs they are ready include:
  - Holding their head up without wobbling
  - Opening their mouth for a spoon
  - Seeming interested in what you are eating
  - Disappearance of prominent “tongue thrust” reflex (pushing food out of their mouth with their tongue)
- When these milestones occur and parents feel ready, it is time to start solid foods.
- Always take your time and follow your baby’s cues. If your baby is interested and enjoying the experience, keep going. If not, wait a week or so and try again. There is no rush.

## What foods should I introduce first and what is the schedule?

- There are many opinions about which foods to introduce first. The most important concept is to start with a **single ingredient food and wait a few days in between new foods** to make sure your baby doesn’t have an allergic reaction. *Allergic reactions* can include vomiting, frequent diarrhea, blood in stools, hives or other rash. If you suspect an allergic reaction, discontinue the food and call our office.
- We encourage a diet rich in **fruits and vegetables**, so this is a good place to start. Babies also need an additional source of iron in the diet, so enriched cereals and pureed meats are good to introduce as well. If you are vegetarian or prefer not to introduce meats or cereal, consider adding a multivitamin with iron such as Poly Vi Sol with Iron, 1 ml dropperful each day, especially if you are breast feeding. Breast milk has a small amount of iron that is very well absorbed, but without an additional source of iron, many babies become anemic.
- Begin by trying a few spoonfuls of a food. As your baby gets the hang of it, work up to 3 meals a day including a fruit or vegetable and a source of iron at each feeding. You can offer the food at a meal time and include breast milk or formula before or after the pureed foods, whichever your baby prefers.
- You can make your own baby food or buy the prepared ones, whichever you prefer. Stage 1 foods are a thin, smooth puree. Stage 2 foods are still a smooth puree, but are a little thicker, with more varieties. Stage 3 foods contain a chunk and smooth component. Most babies prefer self-feeding with table foods when they are ready for a chunky food.

## Are there any foods I should avoid?

- **Honey and cows milk** should be avoided until your baby turns 1 years old
- **Hard foods** your baby could choke on such as raw vegetables or large chunks of meat
- **Round foods** should be cut in half or quarters such as grapes to avoid choking
- It is **OK** to give eggs, dairy, soy, peanut products, or fish. In the past, it was recommended to delay introduction of common allergenic foods. However, updated research has proven this is not necessary and can actually increase rates of food allergies.

## Can I give my baby water?

- Once your baby is **6 months old you** can offer water at meals in a sippy cup. They get enough water in their milk but this is practice for when they will eventually wean from the bottle.
- They do not need more than 8 oz of water a day. Excessive water intake can alter electrolytes and lead to seizures.

## Helpful References:

### Books

Feed Me, I'm Yours by Vicki Lansky

Child of Mine: Feeding with Love and Good Sense by Ellyn Satter

Cooking Light First Foods: Baby Steps to a Lifetime of Healthy Eating

### Websites

[Healthychildren.org](http://Healthychildren.org)

[Strong4life.com](http://Strong4life.com)

### Apps

Solid Starts

