

WELL CHILD: THE FOUR-WEEK-OLD (1 OF 2)
VIRGINIA MASON MEDICAL CENTER – PEDIATRICS AND ADOLESCENT MEDICINE
www.virginiamason.org/pediatrics

Name _____ Weight _____ lbs. _____ oz.
Date _____ Length _____ in.
Head Circumference _____ cm

NUTRITION

- Continue to feed your baby breast milk and/or infant formula. Continue taking prenatal vitamins while nursing.
- To prevent vitamin D deficiency, breastfed infants should take 400 IU of supplemental vitamin D every day. You can give 1 mL of over-the-counter infant vitamin drops (such as D-Vi-Sol, Tri-Vi-Sol, or Poly-Vi-Sol, with or without iron), or 1 mL of “Just D” or 1 DROP (not 1 mL!) of Carlson for Kids Ddrops (400 IU per drop), every day.
- Solids, infant cereals, water, juice, or tea are not appropriate or necessary at this time.
- If breast feeding, remember to continue offering an “educational” bottle regularly.

DEVELOPMENT

- Raises head when lying on stomach
- Fixes and follows with eyes
- Early smiling

SLEEP

- Parental sleep is VERY important. Take shifts. Nap when you can.
- Your infant should sleep only on his/her back as this reduces the risk of sudden infant death syndrome.
- To encourage the development of good sleep habits, try to place your baby in the crib drowsy and ready for sleep, but still awake. This will teach your baby to put her/himself to sleep.
- Keep middle of the night feedings brief and boring to encourage sleep.
- Limit naps during the day to 3 hours or less to encourage a longer stretch at night.

PARENTING

- Your child is probably becoming fussier, especially in the evening. Be patient; fussiness usually declines after 6–8 weeks of age.
- Talk to your doctor or your baby’s doctor if you feel sad or depressed.
- Postpartum depression (“baby blues”) are very common, and can affect both parents. Make sure to take care of yourself: GET SLEEP, eat well, talk about how you are feeling, and allow others to help. Visit www.postpartum.net for more information and resources.
- After 1½–2 hours awake, most babies at this age are tired (fussy) and ready for a nap.
- Pacifiers are fine at this age if your baby loves to suck. Sucking is a self-comforting behavior. You may give your baby a pacifier if she/he wants to suck while awake. Avoid giving it to her/him for sleep every time she/he cries, and don’t use it to delay a feeding when your baby is hungry. Plan to discontinue the pacifier by age 12 months.

ACTIVITIES

- Hold, cuddle, touch.
- Sing, talk, play music.
- Watch mobiles, look at high contrast and brightly colored objects with your baby.
- Take walks outside.

SAFETY

- Check hand-me-down baby gear for recall notices (widely available on the internet).
- Monitor your child closely while in the bath. A towel or washcloth on the bottom of the tub may help prevent sliding. Some babies may start scooting/rolling—never leave them unattended on surfaces above the floor.
- Check the crib and play areas carefully for long cords (strangulation risk).

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- Continue placing your baby on his/her back to sleep on a firm surface without fluffy comforters or pillows in the crib or bassinet.
- Secondhand smoke is harmful. Please keep your baby away from secondhand smoke. A new baby in the family is excellent motivation to stop smoking. Visit smokefree.gov, or talk to your own physician for smoking cessation resources.
- Do not use microwave ovens for heating bottles. They heat unevenly and increase the risk of burns.
- Always use a properly fitted rear-facing car seat. The center rear seat is the safest position.
- Check your smoke detectors and fire extinguishers on a regular basis. Have a family fire exit plan: ladders in upstairs bedroom, etc.

GENERAL HEALTH

- Regular vigorous feeding is the most important sign of good health in an infant. If your infant is not feeding well or feeding becomes less vigorous, take his/her rectal temperature and please call the office.
- If your baby has a rectal temperature above 100.4°F, please call the office immediately, day or night.

NEXT VISIT

- Please schedule your baby's 6–8 week appointment as you leave today.

BOOKS / RESOURCES

Your Baby's First Year by the American Academy of Pediatrics

Caring for Your Baby and Young Child: Birth to Age 5 by the American Academy of Pediatrics

Immunizations & Infectious Diseases

An Informed Parent's Guide by the American Academy of Pediatrics; Margaret C. Fisher, M.D., FAAP, Editor-in-Chief

Heading Home with your Newborn: From Birth to Reality by Laura A. Jana, M.D., FAAP and Jennifer Shu, M.D., FAAP

The Happiest Baby on the Block, by Harvey Karp

My Child Won't Sleep: A Quick Guide to the Sleep Deprived Parent, by Sujay Kansagra

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cdc.gov/vaccines/parents

cispimmunize.org

healthychildren.org

immunizationinfo.org

peps.org

postpartum.net

smokefree.gov

sunlightvitamins.com

vaccines.gov