BRIGHT FUTURES HANDOUT ➤ PARENT

4 MONTH VISIT

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

**HOW YOUR FAMILY IS DOING**

- Learn if your home or drinking water has lead and take steps to get rid of it. Lead is toxic for everyone.
- Take time for yourself and with your partner. Spend time with family and friends.
- Choose a mature, trained, and responsible babysitter or caregiver.
- You can talk with us about your child care choices.

**FEEDING YOUR BABY**

- For babies at 4 months of age, breast milk or iron-fortified formula remains the best food. Solid foods are discouraged until about 6 months of age.
- Avoid feeding your baby too much by following the baby’s signs of fullness, such as:
  - Leaning back
  - Turning away

**If Breastfeeding**

- Providing only breast milk for your baby for about the first 6 months after birth provides ideal nutrition. It supports the best possible growth and development.
- Be proud of yourself if you are still breastfeeding. Continue as long as you and your baby want.
- Know that babies this age go through growth spurts. They may want to breastfeed more often and that is normal.
- If you pump, be sure to store your milk properly so it stays safe for your baby. We can give you more information.
- Give your baby vitamin D drops (400 IU a day).
- Tell us if you are taking any medications, supplements, or herbal preparations.

**If Formula Feeding**

- Make sure to prepare, heat, and store the formula safely.
- Feed on demand. Expect him to eat about 30 to 32 oz daily.
- Hold your baby so you can look at each other when you feed him.
- Always hold the bottle. Never prop it.
- Don’t give your baby a bottle while he is in a crib.

**YOUR CHANGING BABY**

- Create routines for feeding, nap time, and bedtime.
- Calm your baby with soothing and gentle touches when she is fussy.
- Make time for quiet play.
  - Hold your baby and talk with her.
  - Read to your baby often.
- Encourage active play.
  - Offer floor gyms and colorful toys to hold.
  - Put your baby on her tummy for playtime. Don’t leave her alone during tummy time or allow her to sleep on her tummy.
  - Don’t have a TV on in the background or use a TV or other digital media to calm your baby.

**HEALTHY TEETH**

- Go to your own dentist twice yearly. It is important to keep your teeth healthy so you don’t pass bacteria that cause cavities on to your baby.
- Don’t share spoons with your baby or use your mouth to clean the baby’s pacifier.
- Use a cold teething ring if your baby’s gums are sore from teething.
- Don’t put your baby in a crib with a bottle.
- Clean your baby’s gums and teeth (as soon as you see the first tooth) 2 times per day with a soft cloth or soft toothbrush and a small smear of fluoride toothpaste (no more than a grain of rice).

**Helpful Resources:**

Information About Car Safety Seats: www.safercar.gov/parents | Toll-free Auto Safety Hotline: 888-327-4236

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WHAT TO EXPECT AT YOUR BABY’S 6 MONTH VISIT

We will talk about
▪ Caring for your baby, your family, and yourself
▪ Teaching and playing with your baby
▪ Brushing your baby’s teeth
▪ Introducing solid food
▪ Keeping your baby safe at home, outside, and in the car

SAFETY

▪ Use a rear-facing—only car safety seat in the back seat of all vehicles.
▪ Never put your baby in the front seat of a vehicle that has a passenger airbag.
▪ Your baby’s safety depends on you. Always wear your lap and shoulder seat belt. Never drive after drinking alcohol or using drugs. Never text or use a cell phone while driving.
▪ Always put your baby to sleep on her back in her own crib, not in your bed.
  ◦ Your baby should sleep in your room until she is at least 6 months of age.
  ◦ Make sure your baby’s crib or sleep surface meets the most recent safety guidelines.
  ◦ Don’t put soft objects and loose bedding such as blankets, pillows, bumper pads, and toys in the crib.
▪ Drop-side cribs should not be used.
▪ Lower the crib mattress.
▪ If you choose to use a mesh playpen, get one made after February 28, 2013.
▪ Prevent tap water burns. Set the water heater so the temperature at the faucet is at or below 120°F /49°C.
▪ Prevent scalds or burns. Don’t drink hot drinks when holding your baby.
▪ Keep a hand on your baby on any surface from which she might fall and get hurt, such as a changing table, couch, or bed.
▪ Never leave your baby alone in bathwater, even in a bath seat or ring.
▪ Keep small objects, small toys, and latex balloons away from your baby.
▪ Don’t use a baby walker.

Consistent with Bright Futures: Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents, 4th Edition
For more information, go to https://brightfutures.aap.org.