

Additional Information

Today's Date: _____

Baby's Height: _____

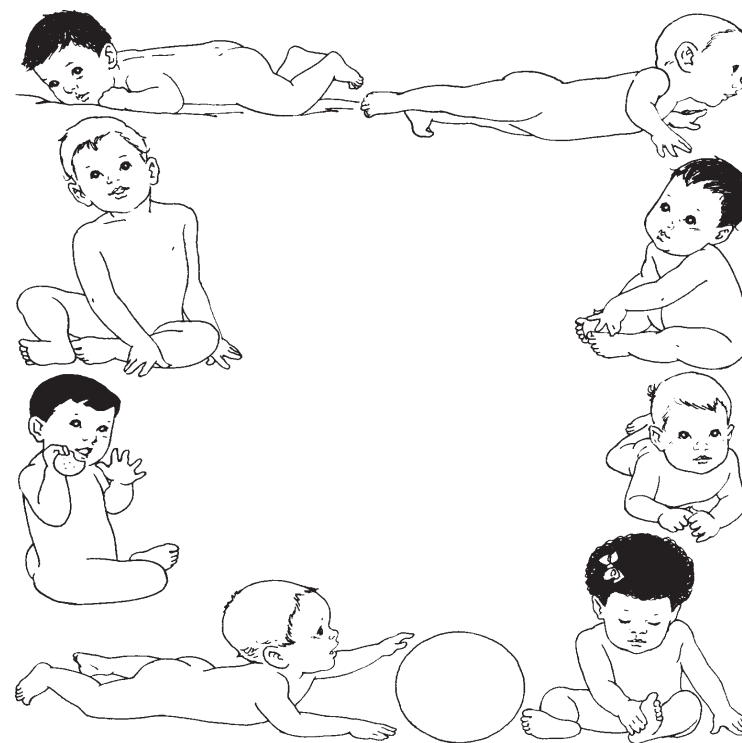
Baby's Weight: _____

Baby's Head Circumference: _____

Special Instructions: _____

Next Appointment: _____

Kent County Wants Healthy Babies



Your Four Month Old



Kent County Health Department
Maternal Infant Health Program
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Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503
616/632-7100
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Kent County Health Department
Maternal Infant Health Program
Childhood Education Series

How Your Baby is Growing

Head/Neck - your baby is losing the hair he had at birth; new hair is coming in. His head and neck are getting stronger. He holds his head steady in a sitting position. He may try to lift his head when he's on his tummy or back.

Eyes - your baby's eyes are starting to follow objects from side to side. You may notice he can see smaller things.

Ears - your baby may turn to the direction of a sound.

Mouth - your baby's mouth is very important. He will use his mouth to feel and taste things. He can use his hands to get things to his mouth.

Movement - your baby brings his hands together. He is starting to reach for things. He may scoot backwards. He may start to roll over.

Growth - your baby may double his birth weight by four to six months. His growth is slowing down a little and he may only gain about one pound this month.



Interacting with Your Baby

Play helps your baby learn and shows him that you love him. It builds trust and makes him feel safe. Play with your baby when he is happy. Happy signs your baby makes are: bright eyes that look at you, smiles, cooing, turning toward - not away from - you, quiet hand sucking, or quiet body movements - not jerky or stiff.

Awareness

Your baby wants to touch, hold and feel everything so:

- stroke him with a furry stuffed animal
- tickle him gently
- blow kisses on his tummy
- let him enjoy the feel of something soft, cool, smooth or rough

Sight

Prop your baby up in a sitting position so he can look around. Talk to him and tell him about what he sees. Show him many things:

- look at his face in a mirror
- look at pictures in a book and name what you see
- show him a toy and, when he reaches for it, give it to him
- take him out to see the world

Hearing

Play “Peek-a-Boo” and “Pat-a-Cake” and listen to your baby laugh. He is learning about different sounds and how to listen so:

- sing to him
- play music
- shake rattles
- talk to him - your voice is the sound he likes best

Exercise/Muscle Development

Continue to practice tummy time to help him develop muscle strength. Get down on the floor with him and talk to him. Place a favorite toy in front of him and watch him move his arms and legs as he tries to reach it.

Falls/Injuries

Never put your baby in a walker. They are unsafe. Babies in a walker can move three feet per second. This is faster than you can react.

Get down on the floor and look around the room to see what your baby could get into. Items to look for include:

- hanging cords
- small and/or breakable objects
- electrical outlets
- cupboards that he can open
- furniture that he could easily pull over

Cleaning supplies, medicines and poisons should be kept in a high place or in a locked cabinet.

Remember to have at least one working smoke detector in your home!

Sleep Patterns

Your baby will probably start to sleep on a schedule.

He may now sleep through the night (about nine hours).

He will probably take a nap in the morning and in the afternoon. Each nap may last two to three hours. He will sleep better in his own bed in a quiet space. Catnaps (10 to 15 minutes of short sleep) don't provide him the sleep he needs.

If he stirs at night but is not fussing, give him a chance to put himself back to sleep.



Feeding Your Baby

Always hold your baby during feedings. Relax and enjoy your time together.

Breast milk or formula is all the liquid your baby should have. He doesn't need water or juice bottles. He gets all the water he needs from breast milk or formula.

Some babies don't need solid foods until around six months. Starting solid foods too soon could possibly lead to one of the following problems either now or later:

- weight problems
- digestive problems
- food intolerances
- problems with allergies

However, all babies develop differently and some may be ready for solid foods between four and six months. Talk with your doctor, nurse or dietitian before starting solid foods. Some signs he may be ready for solid foods are:

- can hold up his head without help from you
- can sit up with little support
- shows interest in food
- readily accepts food

When your baby is ready for solid food, give him plain, dry infant rice or barley cereal mixed with formula or breast milk. Use a spoon to feed it to him.



Some babies may make noises even when they are sleeping. This may not mean he is hungry. If he is awake and wants to be fed, make sure night feedings are a calm and quiet time for him.

Remember if your baby sleeps through the night he will eat more during the day.

Topic of the Month Teeth

Teething

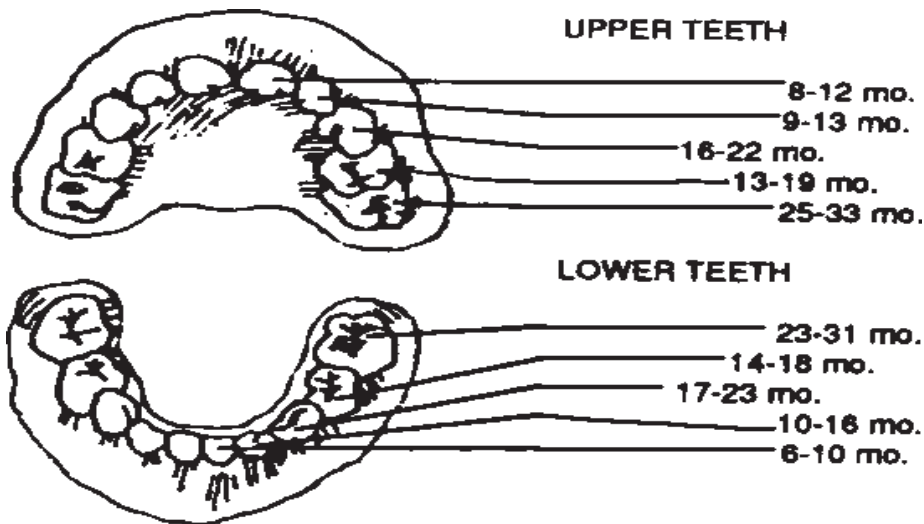
Babies usually get their first teeth between six and eight months. Signs of teething include drooling or biting. His stools may be more frequent and runny. He may be irritable or have problems sleeping. Generally fever (over 100 degrees), vomiting or diarrhea are not symptoms of teething. If this happens, call his doctor.



Some things to do to make your baby more comfortable if he is teething:

- give him something cold to bite or chew on (washcloth or teething ring)
- rub his gums with your finger

This picture shows the usual pattern of cutting teeth, but there are only two rules about teeth. A baby should have one tooth by 18 months and 20 teeth by three years of age.



Dental Care

Start your baby's dental care early. Wipe his gums with a clean, damp cloth twice a day. Never give him a bottle in bed. This could lead to tooth decay and ear infections. Even though he doesn't have teeth, fluoride is important. It helps prevent cavities. If you have city water, continue to use that to mix his formula. City water contains fluoride. If you don't have city water, talk with your baby's doctor about what you can do to add fluoride.

Your Baby's Safety

Always know where your baby is and what he is doing!
Never leave your baby alone in a room with a young child!

Toys

Never put anything around your baby's neck (small toy, pacifier, necklace).

Always read the label when buying a new toy. Safe toys have labels like "nontoxic", "nonflammable" and "lead free".

When buying or using a toy, make sure it doesn't have any small parts that could fall off or any sharp edges.



An object that can fall through the center of a toilet paper roll is too small for your baby.

Stuffed animals should have strong seams and no small pieces that could come off.

Be careful to keep older children's toys away from your baby.

Burns

Do not smoke or drink hot beverages around your baby.

Do not let others smoke around your baby.