

HEALTHY *and* SAFE at 4 Months

Tips for Keeping Your Baby Healthy and Safe

Your Family

- Spend time alone with your other children.
- Encourage your partner to help care for your baby.
- Get help if you and your partner are fighting or having problems. Let your doctor or nurse know. They can help.

Taking Care of Your Baby

- Have routines for feeding, nap time, and bedtime.
- Put your baby to sleep at the same time each day for naps and nighttime, even if your baby isn't sleepy.
- Always put your baby to sleep on his or her back, in a safe crib.
- Massaging your infant may help your baby go to sleep more easily.
- Give your baby a pacifier or baby's fingers or thumb to suck when crying.

Car Safety

- The car safety seat should be in the middle of the back seat facing backwards in all vehicles.
- Never put your baby in the front seat of a vehicle with a passenger air bag.
- Always wear your seat belt.
- Never drink and drive.

Safety

- Keep your car and home smoke free.
- Keep plastic bags, balloons, and other small objects away from your baby.
- Your baby can roll over, so keep a hand on your baby during dressing or changing.
- Never leave your baby alone in bathwater, even in a bath seat or ring.
- Set the hot water heater lower than 120°F.



Crib and Playpen

- Lower your baby's mattress before baby can sit up.
- Don't use a crib with drop sides.
- Do not use loose, soft bedding or toys such as quilts, pillows, or pillow-like bumper pads.
- If you are using a mesh playpen, make sure the openings are less than ¼ inch apart (about the size of a pea).

Child Care

- Choose a mature, trained, and responsible babysitter or caregiver.
- You can talk with your doctor or nurse about your child care choices.

Feeding Your Baby

- Feed your baby only breast milk or iron-fortified formula in the first 6 months.
- If you are still breastfeeding, that's great!
 - Plan to pump and store your breast milk.
- If you are formula feeding, prepare, heat, and store the formula safely. Follow the directions on the formula container label exactly and mix and heat as instructed.
 - 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 can start to feed your baby solid food when your baby is ready.
- Here are some signs that your baby is ready for solid food:
 - Opens mouth for the spoon.
 - Sits with support.
 - Has good head and neck control.
 - Is interested in foods you eat.
- Don't feed your baby peanuts, nuts, fish, and shellfish. Many people are allergic to these foods.
- Don't feed your baby too much. Here are some signs that your baby is full:
 - Baby leans back
 - Baby turns away
- Ask your doctor or nurse about programs like WIC that can help pay for food and formula.

Healthy Teeth

- You can pass bacteria from your mouth to your baby. This can give your baby gum disease or tooth decay. Here's what you can do:
 - Go to your own dentist twice every year to keep your teeth healthy.
 - Do not share spoons or cups with your baby.
 - Clean baby's pacifier with soap and water. Never clean the pacifier with your mouth.
- Use a cold teething ring if your baby has sore gums with teething.

Playing with Your Baby

- Hold, cuddle, talk, read, and sing to your baby each day.
- Learn what things your baby likes and does not like.
- Encourage active play and quiet play.
- Give your baby mirrors, floor gyms, and colorful toys to hold.
- Tummy time is important! Put your baby on his or her tummy when awake and you can watch.

What to Expect at your Baby's 6 Month Visit:

Your child's doctor 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

To Learn More

- **Poison Control Center** 1-800-222-1222
- **Child Safety Seat Inspection** 1-866-SEATCHECK, 1-866-732-8243 or www.seatcheck.org
- **Immunizations** at aap.org/immunization
- **MaineHealth Learning Resource Center** 1-866-609-5183 or <https://mainehealth.org/healthy-communities/learning-resource-center>
- **Barbara Bush Children's Hospital** www.bbch.org
- **American Academy of Pediatrics** healthychildren.org
- **2-1-1 Maine** (a directory of local services) 211 or 1-877-463-6207 or 211maine.org
- **MaineHealth** mainehealth.org