



4–6 months

Parent Tips

- Enjoy your baby's smile and laughter.
- Help them get strong by providing belly time. Belly time helps them learn to hold up their head and roll from belly to back.
- Chat with your baby. Enjoy how they imitate sounds and the rhythm of speech.
- Babies at this age start to sit without support.
- Babies at this age reach for things and put them in their mouth. Expect this even when they are not hungry.

Feeding Advice

- Breast milk is best for your baby; breastfeeding is highly recommended. If you use formula, make sure it is iron-fortified.
- Your baby is ready for solids when they can sit without support, reach for things, open their mouth for a spoon, and hold their head high. This is usually around six months (ask your pediatrician).
- Your baby will know when they are hungry and when they are full.
- Let your baby lead. They will let you know when they are full. Often babies will turn away, close their mouth or spit out the food and milk if they are not hungry.
- Don't worry – if your baby is not hungry now, they will be later.
- Babies do not need juice, sweetened water, soft drinks or honey. Breast milk or formula provide all the liquids your baby needs. Once your baby is 6 months old and is eating solids, or when the weather is hot, you can give your baby water.



Activity Advice

- This a great time for a baby to be active. Encourage belly time each day. Place favorite toys just out of reach to help baby stretch and kick.
- Play music and enjoy your baby's responses. Watch them kick their legs, move their arms or just listen intently.
- Help your baby stand by holding them securely.
- Limit time in swings, car seats or strollers. Limit time in front of the TV and other screens.

Sleep Advice

- Build a calming sleep routine with low lights, a warm bath and **reading**. Avoid screens before bed.
- Do not put your baby to bed with a propped bottle.
- ALWAYS put them on their back to sleep.
- Babies at this age can and should sleep 16 to 18 hours each day.





Play with a Purpose: 4–6 months

Watching Your Baby

- This is a period of rapid development for physical skills and language skills.
- Your baby is starting to:
 - sit without support
 - grasp objects with the palm of the hand
 - learn to pick up small objects with their fingers
 - roll in both directions
- Your baby is listening to everything, making new sounds and pitches.

Fun at Mealtime

- Have baby join the family at mealtime, whether they are eating solids or not. Watch baby join in the chatter around them.
- Let baby smell the foods you are eating. Keep hot foods away from reaching hands.
- When your baby is ready for solids, usually around 6 months, let baby explore food using all five senses. Squishing, mixing, tasting and touching lets baby learn at mealtime. Try slippery avocados or soft bananas.

Play with a Purpose

Every day plan time for baby to be on their belly. Stay with your baby during belly time.

- **Talk** – Sing nursery rhymes to your baby. Add repeating movements to the song and watch your baby try to imitate you.
- **Big muscles** (legs, back, arms) – Put interesting toys just out of reach of baby. Offer toys to the side or places that require them to roll to the toy.
- **Hands and fingers** – Offer toys that are different in texture, size and shape. This helps baby develop all five senses and hand/finger coordination.



Try This!

Let baby “wash” their hands. Put a half inch or less of clean water in a pan or highchair tray. Let them explore the sound, feel and taste of the water. See how much fun they can have.

Want more info? Go to
www.theounceofprevention.org

