

INFANCY – 4 MONTHS

Promotion of healthy habits Injury and illness prevention

Continue to use an infant car seat that is properly secured at all times.
Continue to test the water temperature with your wrist to make sure it is not hot before bathing the baby.

Never leave the baby alone or with a young sibling or pet.

Do not leave him alone in a tub of water or on high places such as changing tables, beds, sofas, or chairs. Always keep one hand on the baby.

Continue to keep the baby's environment free of smoke. Keep the home and car nonsmoking zones.

Do not drink hot liquids or smoke while holding the baby.

Avoid overexposure to the sun.

Keep toys with small parts or other small or sharp objects out of reach.

Keep all poisonous substances, medicines, cleaning agents, health and beauty aids, paints, and paint solvents locked in a safe place out of the baby's sight and reach.

Keep sharp objects (e.g. scissors, knives) out of reach.

Do not give the infant plastic bags, latex balloons, or small objects such as marbles.

Use safety locks on cabinets.

Do not use an infant walker at any age.

Recognize early signs of illness:

Fever

Failure to eat

Vomiting

Diarrhea/dehydration

Unusual irritability, lethargy

Skin rash

Reaction to immunization

Nutrition

Continue to breastfeed or to use iron-fortified formula for the first year of the infant's life. This milk will continue to be his major source of nutrition.

Begin introducing solid foods with a spoon when the infant is four to six months of age. Use a spoon to give him an iron-fortified, single-grain cereal such as rice. If there are no adverse reactions, add a new pureed food to the infant's diet each week, beginning with fruits and vegetables.

Always supervise the infant while he is eating.

Give exclusively breastfeeding infants iron supplements.

Continue to give the breastfeeding infant 400 I.U.s of vitamin D daily if he is deeply pigmented or does not receive enough sunlight

Do not give the infant honey until after his first birthday to prevent infant botulism.

Ensure that your caregiver is feeding the infant appropriately.

Oral health

To protect the infant's teeth, do not put him to bed with a bottle or prop the bottle in his mouth.

Promotion of parent-infant interaction that is mutually enjoyable and satisfying

Nurture the baby by holding, cuddling, and rocking him, and by talking and singing to him.

Encourage the baby's vocalizations. Talk to him during dressing, bathing, feeding, playing, walking, and driving.

Read to the baby. Play music.

Play social games such as pat-a-cake, peek-a-boo, so-big.

Establish a bedtime routine and other habits to discourage night awakening.

Encourage the baby to learn to console himself by putting him to bed awake.

Begin to help the baby learn self-consoling techniques by providing him with the same transitional object - such as a stuffed animal, blanket, or favorite toy - at bedtime or in new situations.

Encourage play with age-appropriate toys.

Discuss baby sitters and child care arrangements with the health professional.

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Promotion of constructive family relationships and parental health

If mother has returned to work: Discuss child care arrangements and role tensions with the health professional.

Take some time for yourself and spend some individual time with your partner.

Keep in contact with friends and family members. Avoid social isolation.

Encourage your partner to participate in caring for the infant.

Continue to meet the needs of other children in the family, appropriately engaging them in the care of the baby.

Promotion of community interactions

Ask about resources or referrals for food (e.g. WIC), housing, or transportation if needed.

Learn about and consider parent-child play groups.

Maintain or expand ties to your community through social, religious, cultural, volunteer, and recreational organizations or resources.