

GROWING LEAPS AND BOUNDS®

SERIES: 3 OF 12



A GUIDE TO HEALTHY FEEDING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FROM INFANCY TO PRESCHOOL YEARS

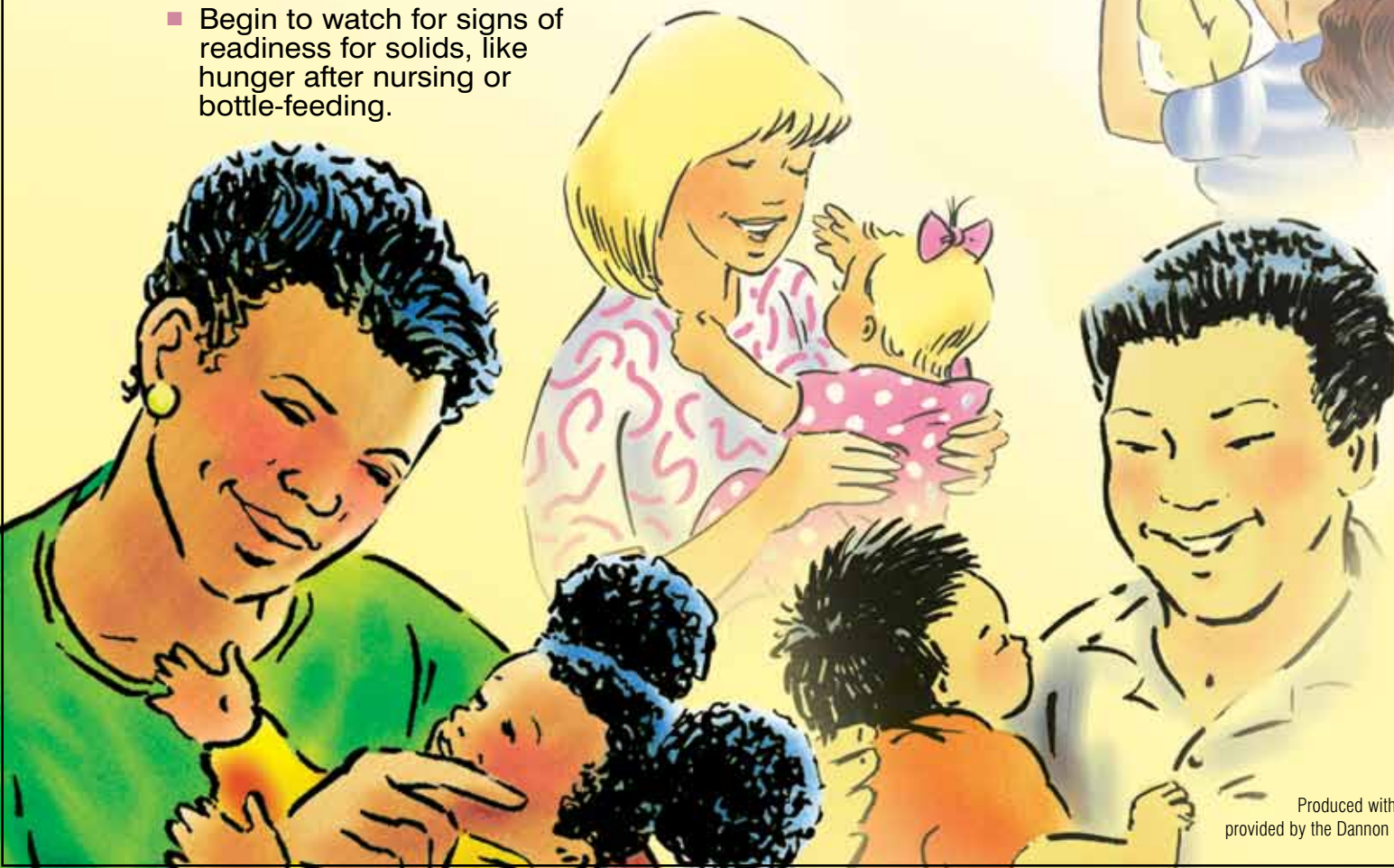
BONDING

Your four-month-old is a pleasure to spend time with! She lets you know when she is happy – usually when you are around – and when something is bothering her. She feeds and produces stools at regular intervals; she sleeps for longer periods of time, hopefully at night; and she cries much less.

The two of you have become a pair and know each other's routines. Playtime is great fun for both of you and helps your baby develop into a content and confident child!

Until Your Next Well-Child Visit...

- Feed your baby only breast milk or formula until you speak with your pediatrician about starting solids.
- Build a physical playtime routine with your baby – carefully turn, roll, bounce, and sway your baby.
- Begin to watch for signs of readiness for solids, like hunger after nursing or bottle-feeding.



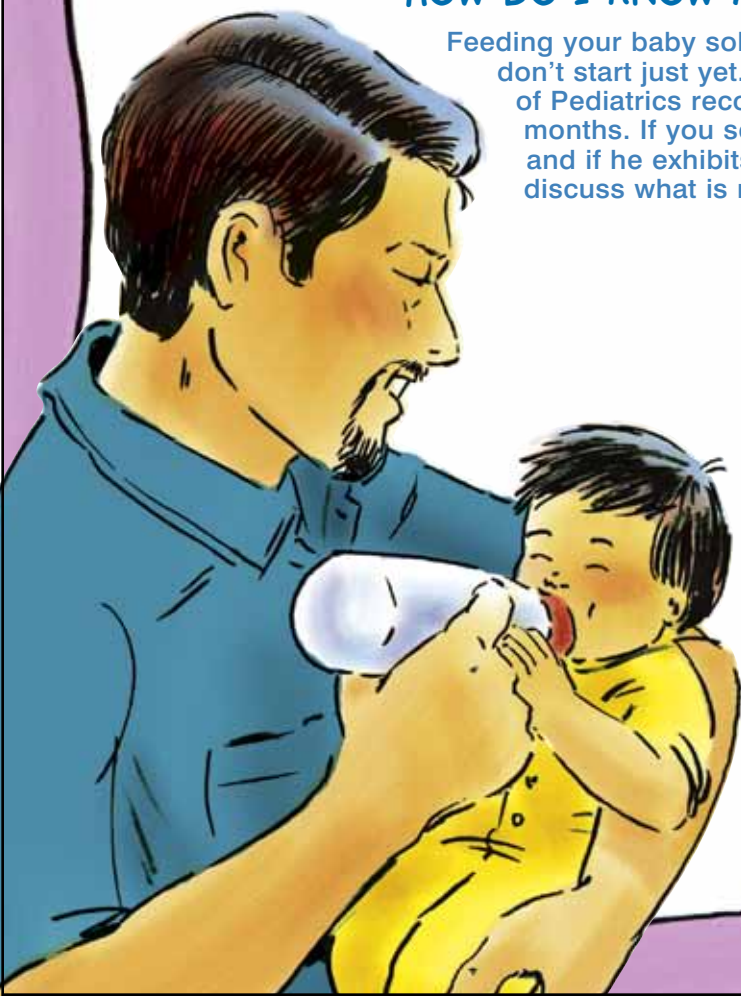
YOUR BABY'S DOCTOR WILL PROBABLY WANT YOU TO KEEP YOUR BABY EXCLUSIVELY ON BREAST-OR BOTTLE-FEEDING FOR ANOTHER MONTH OR TWO. BREAST MILK OR FORMULA STILL IS GIVING HIM ALL THE NUTRITION HE NEEDS.

- 1 Continue to avoid cow's milk until your baby is about 12 months old; your baby cannot digest it.
- 2 Continue to feed your baby six to eight times a day, just before family meal and snack times when possible.
- 3 Do not give your baby other fluids like juice, tea, soda, or water.
- 4 Do not start feeding your baby solids without first talking to your baby's doctor.
- 5 Continue to respect your baby's appetite. He will give you signs that he is still hungry or has eaten enough.

HOW DO I KNOW MY BABY IS READY FOR SOLIDS?

Feeding your baby solids for the first time is an exciting moment, but don't start just yet. Most pediatricians and the American Academy of Pediatrics recommend starting solid foods at around six months. If you sense that your baby is ready to start solid foods and if he exhibits the following signs, call your pediatrician to discuss what is right for your baby:

- Controls head and neck movements when sitting with little support.
- Puts hands and toys in his mouth.
- Has doubled his birth weight and weighs at least 13 pounds.
- Makes chewing motions with his mouth.
- Suckles a spoon when it is offered.
- Seems hungry after nursing eight to 10 times or drinking 32 ounces of formula during the course of the day.



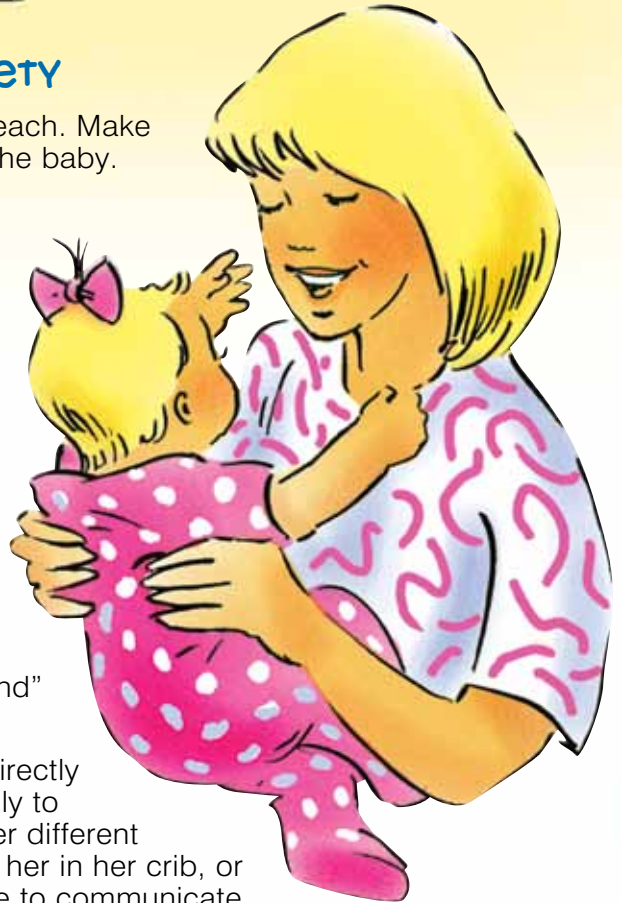
A FEW WORDS ABOUT FEEDING SAFETY

- Keep foods your baby can choke on out of his reach. Make sure older children know not to share food with the baby.
- Take extra care when drinking hot liquids that your baby could grab and spill.
- Replace bottle nipples that are cracked, torn, or worn from use, teething, or chewing. Pieces can break off and choke your baby.

BONDING WITH YOUR BABY

Bonding has been a success! Your baby smiles and turns her head when she hears your voice. She has special laughs and sounds for her family and other caregivers. Encourage her to coo and giggle when you talk to her. Repeat her sounds back to her to let her know you "understand" what she is saying; this helps build confidence.

Continue to hold and hug her often, and to look directly at her when talking and playing. And listen carefully to her cries – when you recognize and respond to her different cries by feeding her, changing her diaper, putting her in her crib, or playing with her, you help her feel secure and able to communicate her needs to you. You can't spoil a baby at this age.



NOW WOULD BE A GOOD TIME TO...

Find out about the fluoride content of your well or municipal tap water. Fluoride helps protect your baby's teeth from cavities and can be provided once your baby starts solids, if it is not in the water supply.

Begin childproofing. Plug plastic safety caps into electrical outlets and move small or breakable objects from low shelves and tables. Babies like to put things in their mouths, so make sure toys don't have loose pieces or tags and clothes don't have loose buttons, strings, or snaps.

HELPFUL HINTS

- Feeding time is social time for your baby, so talk to her and pay attention to her. She also likes to sit with the family during mealtime and play with a spoon or plastic cup.
- Take your baby outside often. Bundle her up if it's cold or windy and keep her bare skin shaded from the sun if it's bright out. If your baby is younger than six months old, check with your pediatrician before applying sunscreen.
- Resist the temptation to put your baby in a bouncy seat while you're cooking, cleaning, or doing chores... and NEVER place your baby on the counter. She might get hurt if you're not watching.

Puzzled about why your sunny, happy baby suddenly becomes cranky and irritable? The answer could be that he is teething. The teething process can begin at around four months for some babies. Many of the signs and symptoms are ambiguous, so you may not see any sign of new teeth in your child's mouth.

What to Watch for:	What to Do:
<p>Irritability</p> <p>Your baby's on-and-off fussiness can last days or weeks at a time and is a reaction to pain in the gums.</p>	<p>Soothe and comfort your baby. Ask your baby's doctor about when to give an infant pain reliever.</p>
<p>Drooling</p> <p>You might see a somewhat sudden increase in drooling. However, some babies who are not yet teething drool more than others. Since your baby still is learning how to swallow, he may drool a lot. Your baby also may cough from saliva dribbling down his throat.</p>	<p>Gently dry your baby's face several times daily to prevent moisture from causing a rash on his chin and around his mouth. Bibs will help prevent the baby's clothes from getting wet, which can cause irritation. Ask your baby's doctor about a barrier ointment that can be applied to the chin if it starts to get irritated.</p>
<p>Fever</p> <p>Low-grade fever – 100.4°F to 102°F measured rectally – is possible.</p>	<p>Call your baby's doctor, especially if fever is higher.</p>
<p>Chewing and Gnawing</p> <p>Chewing on fingers, toys, blankets, and other easy-to-grab objects helps your baby relieve gum pain.</p>	<p>Place liquid-filled teething toys or damp washcloths in the refrigerator and offer to your baby for relief. Or offer him hard rubber rings or other teething toys. Check often for signs of wear and possible choking hazards.</p>
<p>Runny Nose</p> <p>Occasional dripping and wetness may be due to teething. Symptoms like fever and cough could mean your baby has a cold.</p>	<p>Talk to the doctor if runny nose persists or if mucus becomes thicker.</p>
<p>Ear Pulling</p> <p>Teething can cause pain in the ears.</p>	<p>Notify your baby's doctor if ear pulling lasts more than a day or so and if your baby has a fever, both possible signs of an ear infection.</p>
<p>Diarrhea</p> <p>Teething can cause stools to become looser.</p>	<p>Call the doctor if diarrhea persists for more than a couple of diapers and is unusual for your baby.</p>
<p>Teeth Erupting</p> <p>Gums become swollen before teeth erupt. The front upper and lower teeth usually erupt first.</p>	<p>Soothe discomfort with chilled, liquid-filled teething toys.</p>

AT FOUR MONTHS, YOUR BABY IS ACTIVE! HE WAVES HIS ARMS AND LEGS, SPLASHES IN THE INFANT TUB, AND MAY EVEN ROLL OVER.

His hand and finger skills are beginning to develop. He loves playing with his fingers, hands, and toes, and explores everything with his mouth. He can't do much for himself, so he needs you to bring him toys, pick up what he drops, and help him move around. Your baby loves to play, especially with you!



- Play together several times a day for as long as your baby is interested. Babies love having their arms and legs moved gently in circles or up and down. Build a playtime routine just like feeding and bedtime.
- Offer safe toys that are right for your baby's age and development, such as hand-sized blocks, stacking toys, nesting cups, textured balls, and squeeze toys.
 - Gently turn, roll, bounce, and sway your baby.
 - With your baby sitting on your lap and holding his waist, gently sway your baby from side to side and away from and toward you. Not too fast – be sure your baby can control his head. This type of activity builds good control of posture that will be needed for sitting and eventually standing.
- Lay your baby on his back and slowly pull him up to a sitting position; then hold him upright. This helps strengthen arm, leg, stomach, neck, and back muscles.
- Put a toy just out of reach to encourage movement. Help your child reach the toy before he gets frustrated.
- Limit the time your baby spends sitting in an infant seat, swing, lap, or high chair. Too much sitting will make it hard to learn other important skills. Be sure to include "tummy time."
- Don't be shy – your baby likes to hear your voice. Describe toys, sing songs, recognize your child's actions by saying "Wow! Look at you reach for that!"
- Avoid unsafe toys – those small enough to swallow, too heavy to hold, and with sharp points and edges. Any toy or object that can easily fit in the tube of a toilet paper roll is too small!



NEW FRIENDS

For the past few months, your baby has been almost your whole world, and you have bonded to create a special relationship.

By now you may be ready to socialize with other adults, especially those who have babies around the same age as your child. To find new friends, ask around your neighborhood or visit a local park or playground. Parents and caregivers will come up to you to chat! You can share stories and ideas about dealing with the daily challenges of taking care of a baby. Taking walks together with other parents and babies is great physical activity that helps you feel better and get back into shape. Outdoor walks give babies the chance to experience new sights and sounds. Friends you and your baby make now can last for many years!



Always talk with your baby's doctor when you have questions about your baby's growth, development, and overall health. Ask which situations should prompt an immediate phone call, a visit to the office, or a trip to the emergency room.

The Dannon Institute is a non-profit foundation dedicated to promoting research, education, and communication about the link between nutrition and good health. "Growing Leaps and Bounds™" was created to help build a solid foundation of healthy eating and activity for your child, now and for the future. The Dannon Institute is supported by The Dannon Company, Inc.

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