Optimum Internal Medicine & Pediatrics
Dr. Christopher Burress
Board certified Internal Medicine and Pediatrics

Caring for your 4-month-old baby

Name_____ Weight_____ Height_____ Date_____

Keep Your Baby Safe

Use a Car Seat

Install the car seat properly in the back seat, rear-facing until your baby reaches the seat manufacturer's maximum rear-facing height or weight limit.

Use a Safe Crib

- Make sure the space between the slats is less than 2½ inches.
- Don't use a crib with sharp edges that your baby can hit.

Prevent Suffocation

- Place your baby on your baby's back to sleep.
- A string can choke your baby. Keep strings and necklaces away from your baby.
- Some toys are small enough or have parts small enough that your baby could choke on them. Don't give your baby toys like these. Give your baby toys made for your baby's age.

Prevent Injuries

- Don't leave your baby alone—ever. Use extra care when your baby is in water, near young children or pets, or on any surface that your baby can fall from.
- Don't use a walker that will let your baby move across the floor.
- Set the water heater thermostat so that the water is not hotter than 120ºF.
- Make sure you have smoke detectors on your ceiling. Check twice a year to make sure they work.
- Keep your baby away from hot things (like cigarettes or an iron). Don't hold your baby when you are drinking something hot (like coffee).
- Never shake, toss or hit your baby.

Provide Healthy Nutrition

- Breast milk or infant formula is all your baby needs. A healthy baby does not need vitamins. We don't recommend solid food until 6 months of age. Juice once or twice a day is okay.
- Talk with your health care provider if your baby uses a "low iron" formula.
- Feed your baby every 2 to 4 hours. Keep nighttime feedings quiet and as short as possible.
- Don't prop a bottle in your baby's mouth. Don't put your baby in the crib with a bottle.
- Spitting up is normal. For less spit-up, burp frequently.

Optimum Internal Medicine & Pediatrics
Dr. Christopher Burress
Board certified Internal Medicine and Pediatrics

Practice Healthy Parenting and Care-giving

Encourage Healthy Development

- Smile at and gently touch your baby as much as possible.
- Create a schedule for your baby's day and try to keep to it.
- Excite your baby's sense of sight. Show your baby a sturdy, brightly colored picture book.
- Excite your baby's sense of touch. Let your baby touch objects with different textures (like soft, hard, glossy or furry).
- Excite your baby's sense of hearing. Talk and sing to your baby and give your baby objects that make noise (like a bell or rattle)
- Strengthen your baby and your baby's coordination. Help your baby push up on your baby's arms while on your baby's belly; help your baby sit up in the corner of a couch; offer your baby something to pull on.
- Never yell at your baby. You can keep your baby safe by moving your baby or removing the object that makes you worried.

Deal with Crying

- When your baby cries, ask yourself, "Is my baby hungry? Does your baby want to be changed? Does your baby want to be held? Is your baby too stimulated (from too much touch, noise or light)? Is your baby in pain (like from teething)? Does your baby have a fever?"
- Don't feed your baby every time your baby cries. Don't use a pacifier every time your baby cries. Use it when you think your baby needs to calm down.
- Treat the pain of teething with non-prescription teething medicine applied to the gum or with acetaminophen or ibuprofen.

Sleep

- Place your baby on your baby's back in the crib when your baby is drowsy but still awake.
- Your baby needs naps and a regular bedtime.
- Don't change your baby's diaper in the middle of the night unless your baby has pooped or has a rash.

Clean Your Baby

- If your baby boy is uncircumcised, don't try to pull back your baby's foreskin.
- Don't bathe your baby every day. When you do, use warm water and mild baby soap.

Prevent Sickness—Identify It Early

- Keep your baby away from cigarette smoke. Do not smoke with the baby in the car; do not smoke in the home.
- Don't let someone touch your baby without first washing their hands.
- Call the clinic right away if your baby has a fever, is coughing a lot or may be dehydrated. A fever is a rectal temperature of 100.4°F or higher. A dehydrated baby has fewer than five wet diapers a day, cries without making tears, or has dry lips and a pasty mouth.

Development

All babies develop at their own rate. At this age you may notice that your baby:

- Smiles and laughs
- Initiates interaction with others
- Starts to babble
- Drools (not always a sign of teething)
- Brings hands together and to mouth
- Lifts head and chest while lying on tummy
- Shows good head control
- Rolls over and reaches for objects

Your baby's next visit is when your baby is about 6-months-old. At this check-up your baby will receive your baby's third set of immunizations (shots). Remember to bring your baby's shot record with you. Read the shot handouts given to you at next visit. Bring acetaminophen or ibuprofen for infants with you to the next visit.