

## 4-6 month baby

### Your baby's development at 4-6 months

Once your baby reaches 4 to 6 months, you may be starting to think about preparing for weaning. Government guidelines advise waiting until 6 months before weaning, and definitely not before 17 weeks. Although milk should be the main source of nutrition in your baby's diet for some time yet, your baby's increasing activity levels will soon mean solid foods become an essential part of their healthy, balanced diet.

### Other changes happening at 4-6 months

#### Weaning Signs

Once you begin to spot the signs your baby is ready to wean, provided they are old enough, you should begin by introducing smooth purées in roughly the consistency of double cream and in gentle flavours. Aptamil Creamy Porridge is ideal as a first weaning food, or try a baby rice which can be mixed with their usual milk for a familiar taste. This will make the transition easier and help your baby to accept the unfamiliar feeling of the spoon and the texture of the food that's on it. Puréed carrot is also a perfect first weaning food as carrots have a natural sweetness which babies love, teaching them to enjoy vegetables from an early age. Introducing these sweet vegetables early on will pay long term dividends.

A teaspoonful or two a day to start with will ease them in gently. It may seem like a very small amount but weaning is a very gradual process. If you're bottlefeeding, a follow-on milk can also prove a good source of nutrition once they are 6 months or over as they are specially developed to complement your baby's weaning diet and give them the iron that they need at this stage. If you're thinking of switching your baby to a follow on milk, why not speak to our feeding advisors on **08457 623 628** for tips on how to make the transition as smooth as possible?

#### Sitting up

Your baby is on the verge of a new set of developments. As their arms, upper body and neck become stronger, they'll soon be able to sit up, wriggle and roll around. If their newfound agility makes nappy changing more tricky, moving the changing mat down onto the floor will avoid any accidents and never leave them alone for any length of time.

The floor is also an ideal place to play. Place your baby on their tummy and encourage them to stretch for toys that are slightly out of their reach. This will strengthen their stomach muscles and provide the ideal opportunity to roll over – an important milestone in your baby's development.

#### A better grip

Your baby is discovering how to use their hands and fingers through everyday acts like grabbing for a toy or dangling mobile and clutching at things nearby. As your baby's natural grasp reflex gradually turns into more controlled hand and finger movements, they'll be able to explore objects by grasping and shaking them with their hands rather than simply sucking on them. If you're using a bottle, allow your baby to hold it with both hands – it will improve their grip and free you up to do other things. An improved view

Your baby's eyesight is improving – they can now see further and focus better, even as far as their toes. As their world becomes a more entertaining and colourful place, it's a good idea to keep your hair tied back or glasses out of reach. By 6 months their eyesight will have improved even more and they'll be able to see across the room.

### **Finding their voice**

At 4 – 6 months you may well be amazed at the range of new sounds that your baby can make. Along with coos and babbles you may even be able to hear 'ma' and 'pa' words. It may be a while before your baby knows to call you 'mama' by name but it's nice and incredibly entertaining to hear, nonetheless.

You might also begin to hear genuine laughs or giggles – especially during playtime. Tickling is the most obvious way to encourage laughter. Enjoy laughing along with them - which shouldn't be difficult - as this will also give them positive encouragement.

### **Learning**

Studies have shown that chatting and singing to your baby can aid speech development. Although they might not be able to understand you, your baby will be able to process the sounds and eventually copy what they're hearing. Simple, daily interaction – whether it's talking, laughing or smiling will help them to develop.

Another way to aid learning is to fill a plastic container with rice or pasta and let them hold it to practice using their hand and finger muscles. The noises which are made as your baby moves, shakes and even drops the container will delight and surprise them, and help them to understand consequences.

Bath time can also provide your baby with a chance to understand how they can affect things – as their hands and feet splash about, so does the water.

To talk to our team about weaning, your baby's development or anything else that's on your mind, give them a call on **08457 623 628**, Monday to Friday, 8am - 8pm. Or try Live Chat for an instant online conversation, Monday - Friday, 9am - 5pm.

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