Anticipatory Guidance for Parents: 4 months

Child's name: ____________________________ Date ________ Height ________ Weight ______

Immunizations received: ______________________________________________________________

Next visit: ____________________ Immunizations needed: __________________________________

Remember to bring your baby’s vaccination record with you.

This sheet is meant to answer some common questions you may have about this age.

**Nutrition**

For most babies, breast milk or formula with iron are still all that is needed until close to six months of age. For formula fed infants, you may add cereal between 4-6 months of age to increase calories.

Signs of being ready for solid food include:

- Wanting to nurse more often and not satisfied with breastfeeding or formula
- Showing an interest in what other family members are eating.

When your baby is ready, start solid foods slowly. Begin with rice cereal mixed with breast milk, formula, apple juice or water.

Once your baby is able to eat from a spoon for a week, try adding new Stage I baby foods, one at a time in small amounts (vegetables before fruit). As you start new foods, watch for signs of food sensitivity such as vomiting, diarrhea, hives, or wheezing.

Expect your baby’s new experience with solid foods to be slow and messy. Use a bib and try to be patient.

Avoid introducing foods such as peanuts, shellfish, tree nuts and fish until after at least 1 year of age.

**Diaper Changes**

Babies will continue to have 6 to 8 wet diapers a day. Stools may become more solid and colorful as new foods are eaten.

**Sleeping**

An established routine for naps, bedtime, and feeding is a good idea at this point, and will help to increase your baby’s sense of security. Your baby may start sleeping for 6 to 8 hours during the night. Place your baby in the bed awake. This way he will learn to fall asleep and console him/herself.

Continue to put baby on the back to sleep. Lower the crib mattress before the baby can sit up by him/herself. If your baby starts rolling over, there is no need to reposition on the back.

Daytime naps will become more organized and happen every 3 to 4 hours for up to 1 to 2 hours at a time. Some babies will only need several short naps during the day.

Do not leave the pacifier or bottle in your baby’s mouth while they sleep.

**Development**

Babies develop at their own rate. During the next two months, you may notice that your baby can:

- Enjoy simple games (peek-a-boo, pat-a-cake)
• Turn head toward the sound of your voice
• Smile at self in mirror
• Roll from stomach to back
• Reach for objects and put them in mouth
• Follow moving objects with eyes
• Transfer objects from hand to hand
• Imitate sounds
• Babble back when talked to

Your baby may begin teething: drooling, become fussy or putting things in their mouth. You may give them Tylenol or a teething ring to reduce symptoms.

Learning Through Play
Supply your baby with a lot of playthings to touch, squeeze, and suck. This helps develop a sense of space, form, and texture.

Encourage quiet and active playtime such as reading and singing time or playing on a floor gym.

Safety
Accidents are more frequent than in the first three months because your baby moves and grabs more. Keep your baby in a safe place near you. Without supervision, the floor and bed are unsafe.

Securely fasten in an infant seat so baby cannot wiggle out of it. Keep buttons, beads, coins, and other small objects out of reach. Remove any hanging mobiles from the crib area. Your baby could become tangled in them.

Don’t use baby walkers. Falls are common and injuries can be serious. Walkers can also delay the development of walking skills.

Have smoke detectors in working order.

Ensure electrical outlets are covered.

Babies need about 15 minutes per day of indirect sunlight to make Vitamin D. Do not place your baby in direct sunlight. Do not use sunscreen until at least 6 months of age.

Never leave your baby near water or in a bathtub alone; not even to answer the phone.

Never leave your baby alone in the car, even for a few minutes.

Remember to always use an infant care seat correctly when taking your baby in a car. Car seats should be in the back seat, and face the face the rear of the car until your baby is at least 1 year old and weighs at least 20 pounds.

Are your children safe at home? Please talk to you doctor, nurse practitioner, or social worker if you have any concerns about safety for your child.

Positive Parenting
This is typically a very social age. Sibling rivalry is common. Help your children enjoy each other:

• Involve older siblings in child care such as getting things, choosing clothes, and rocking the baby
• Focus attention on older children, too—not just on the baby.
• Plan special time with each child doing something that he/she likes to do.
• Help older children develop new interests and play with toys and friends of their own.
• Help the older child read a book or show pictures to the baby and thank them for doing such a good job.
• Point to the older child things he/she can do because he/she is older and more capable than the baby.

Preventing Illness
Make sure everyone in the family washes hands:
• Before and after preparing foods, eating or feeding your child
• Before and after using the bathroom or changing a diaper
  Don’t smoke in the home or car.

Expect about 6 upper respiratory tract infections per year. Most will not need antibiotics.

When should I call the clinic?
• Rectal temperature higher than 100.4
• Feeding problems: not eating or drinking as much as usual
• Decrease in wet diapers when ill
• If you are worried about your baby
• Trouble breathing—call 911

This sheet is not specific to your child, but provides general information. If you have any questions or concerns, many resources are available to help you.

Georgia Health Sciences Family Medicine Clinic
Appointments and Questions
(706) 721-4588

Early childhood Special Education
Screening and services for developmental delay or disability are available through your county’s Board of Education.
Richmond County BOE 706-826-1000
Columbia County BOE 706-541-0650
Aiken County BOE 803-641-2428

Early childhood Family Education
For classes about raising your children, call your local school district.

Health Departments
For information regarding car seat safety, WIC programs, hearing screenings, immunization programs, and “Babies Can’t Wait” for children with developmental delay:

Richmond County 706-721-5800
Fort Gordon WIC Clinic 706-787-4263
C&Y Clinic (GHS) 706-721-2341
M&I (GHS) 706-721-3886
South Augusta Clinic 706-790-0661

Columbia County:
• Appling clinic 706-541-1318
• Evans clinic 706-868-3330
• Grovetown clinic 706-556-3727

Burke County: 706-554-3456

Aiken County 803-642-1687

Child Abuse Reporting
706-721-3381

Committee for Missing Children
1-800-525-8204 (24 hr) and call 911

Smoking Cessation
For tips on how to quit smoking, speak to your physician or call the Quit Line 1-800-270-STOP.

Second hand smoke has been proven to cause and worsen childhood asthma and lung cancer. Keep your baby healthy.

Poison Control Center
Toll-free number 1-800-222-1222.
Do NOT make your child vomit.