

Breastfeeding At 4 Months

A Counseling Guide for Health Care Professionals

Counseling Message for Mothers	Background for Professionals
Feed your baby when you see signs of hunger (typically 7 to 8 times every 24 hours).	At this age, breastfed babies consume more at a feeding and go longer between feedings.
Breastfed babies may go several days without a bowel movement and then have a large soft stool.	It is normal for stools to be soft and the color of yellow mustard. Bowel movements may be as infrequent as every 3-4 days or even less often.
It is normal for infants to drool more at 3 to 4 months of age.	Baby's salivary glands are becoming more active.
Vitamin D is the only vitamin or mineral supplement needed by breastfed babies before 6 months of age. A daily supplement of 200 IU of vitamin D is recommended.	Breastfed babies less than 6 months old do not need a fluoride supplement. <u>Note:</u> If a baby has been diagnosed with iron deficiency anemia, an iron supplement is warranted.
Wait until baby is around 6 months old before offering any juice or solid foods.	Breastmilk provides the nutrition baby needs for the first 6 months. Some babies are ready for solid foods around 4 months of age. Developmental signs of readiness for solid foods include sitting with support and controlling the head and neck. Early introduction of solids may decrease nursing time, affect milk production, and predispose an infant to allergies.
You can continue breastfeeding or feeding expressed breastmilk if you return to work or school.	Breastfeeding mothers have several feeding options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breastfeed baby (child care provider is on-site or nearby). • Breastfeed when with baby and collect/store breastmilk for feedings when apart. • Breastfeed when with baby and formula feeding when apart. <p>Tell mothers how to safely store expressed breastmilk.</p>



Breastfeeding At 4 Months (continued)

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<p>If you choose to stop breastfeeding, gradual weaning is easiest for you and your baby.</p>	<p>Encourage mothers to initiate weaning gradually by replacing one feeding with formula for 2-3 days. This allows her milk supply to decrease slowly without fullness and discomfort. Mothers can continue to wean at their own pace by replacing one feeding at a time. Mothers can partially wean (i.e., continue breastfeeding several times per day) and maintain that feeding pattern for days or weeks before deciding to replace another feeding.</p>
<p>If formula supplementation is needed, offer iron-fortified infant formula.</p>	<p>Recommend iron-fortified formula as a supplement until the baby's first birthday. For healthy breastfed babies, soy or protein hydrolysate formulas do not offer any advantages over cows' milk formulas as a supplemental feeding.</p>
<p>Questions? Call one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certified breastfeeding educators • Certified lactation consultants • Health care professionals • La Leche League • Peer support groups • Physicians • WIC staff 	<p>Mothers and babies are not born knowing how to breastfeed. It takes patience and practice to learn and recognize each other's signals. Identify sources of support from family members, friends, and the community. Encourage mothers to call with questions or for advice.</p>

