

Feeding Styles of Babies

Everyone has a different personality and temperament. So do babies. Adults have different eating styles. So do babies. It is part of their unique personality.

Listed below are some feeding styles of babies which may help you understand your baby's feeding style.

Barracudas - When put to the breast, barracudas vigorously grasp the nipple and suck energetically for 5 to 20 minutes. There is no dallying. Occasionally, this type of infant puts too much vigor into his nursing and bruises the nipple.

- Try to feed the baby before he is hungry. Put a warm wet washcloth on the breast and gently massage the breast before you put the baby to the breast. This will make the milk flow sooner. Make sure the baby opens his mouth widely before latch-on so that he does not clamp on and smash the nipple.

Excited - Excited babies become so excited and active at the breast that they alternately grasp and lose the breast. Then they start screaming.

- It is often necessary to take the baby off the breast and quiet him first, and then put him back to the breast. You may need to do this 3-4 times before he settles down and nurses. Try to stay calm as these babies will get tense if they feel that you are tense or upset.

Procrastinators - Procrastinators are lazy nursers. They wait until the fuller milk supply comes in to start nursing well. They show no particular interest in eating and may sleep more than a newborn baby should. They lose interest quickly, fall asleep at the breast quickly and do not empty the breast well.

- Wake if needed to feed this type of baby. "Switch" nurse by going back and forth every 5 minutes so that the baby nurses at least 20 minutes. Watch for adequate dirty diapers.

Mouthers - Mothers insist on licking the nipple, tasting a little milk, then smacking their lips before starting to nurse. If the infant is hurried or prodded, he will become furious and start to scream. Usually, after a few minutes of licking, he settles down and nurses very well.

- Relax and don't hurry this type of baby. Feedings will take at least 20-30 minutes.

Resters - Resters prefer to nurse a few minutes and then rest a few minutes. They often nurse well, although the entire procedure will take much longer. They cannot be hurried. Premature babies or babies with special medical problems are often resters.

- You may need to stimulate this type of baby by waking them for feedings or stimulating them during the feeding. Put a warm wet washcloth on the breast and gently massage the breast before you put the baby to the breast. This will make the milk flow easier. Try "switch" nursing by going back and forth every 5 minutes so that the baby nurses at least 20 minutes. Watch for adequate dirty diapers.

Adapted from Lawrence & Lawrence, *Breastfeeding: A Guide for the Medical Professional*