

Baby Feeding Signs

Do you wonder how much the baby eats when he/she nurses?

Do you wish your breast had ounce markings on it?

Do you wonder if your baby is getting enough to eat?

Do you think your baby should follow a feeding schedule?

It is common for nursing mothers to ask these questions.

When it comes to eating, it is helpful to know that your baby is.... **just like you!**

Just like you:

- Babies have their own eating pattern
- Babies know when their belly is empty and when it is full
- The amount babies eat changes throughout the day

You would not want someone telling you when to eat and how much you must eat, neither does your baby. Your baby will give you signs of when they want to eat and when they are full. Right after the baby is born, it may seem hard to figure out your baby's feeding signs. It won't take long to learn your baby's signs. Trust your baby and follow their lead, instead of worrying and scheduling.

Signs your baby may be ready to eat:

- Mouthing motions, sucking fingers
- Licking lips, rapid eye movements
- Starts to become tense and fussing
- Crying- a *late* sign

During the day and evening, feed your baby when they first show signs they are ready to eat. Don't wait until they start crying. Latch-on may be more difficult when the baby is over hungry or crying.

Signs your baby is full:

- Unlatch themselves
- After eating a while, they fall asleep at the breast or bottle
- Content right after feeding

The size of a baby's belly and the amount they eat will change as they grow. Let them decide what is the right amount. Watch your baby, not the clock.

Signs of over-feeding*:

- Without crying, spits up right after most feedings
- Cries with belly ache after most feedings which is relieved by spitting or vomiting
- Gaining too much weight for age

Babies love to suck. Some babies will continue sucking even when they are full.

There is a difference between eating and sucking needs.

* Call your health care provider if you are unable to calm your baby or they continue to cry for hours.

Using mom's milk in a bottle:

- Be careful, it is easy to overfeed when using a bottle. They should not eat too fast. A feeding should take at least 15 minutes. Slow them down as needed and don't insist that they finish the bottle.

Remember..crying, fussing or desire to suck does not always mean hunger!