

# Baby's hunger and fullness cues (0-6 months)

During the first year, **baby's appetite changes a lot**. They may want to eat more, or less, based on their growth spurts.

**Babies show they're hungry and full through various cues** or signals, even before they can speak. By following baby's cues, instead of the clock or comparing against what they've eaten on recent days, you can **better meet their ever-changing needs**.

## Hunger cues

**Early cues:** baby opens their mouth, turns their head from side to side



**Mid cues:** baby smacks their lips, increases their movements, sucks on their hands, brings legs and arms into their body



**Late cues:** baby cries, has fussy movements, becomes very upset



*Responding to baby before these cues can help avoid a frantic or fussy feed.*

Feeding babies when they show early or mid hunger cues can help make **feedings more calm and enjoyable** for both baby and caregivers. It shows baby that their caregiver can recognize and meet their needs. Research shows that following this baby-led, responsive feeding style **teaches children how to manage their own hunger**. This can **promote healthy eating patterns** later in life.

## Fullness cues

**When baby is full, they may:**

- slow or stop their sucking
- let go of the breast or bottle
- turn their head away
- close their mouth
- relax their arms and legs
- close their eyes
- fall asleep



**If you continue to offer food to baby after they are full, they may:**

- try to push the breast or bottle away
- turn their head away
- arch their back
- become very upset
- cry



Recognizing and following baby's fullness cues are important parts of **responsive feeding**. This practice allows baby to eat according to their growth needs and can help them develop healthy eating patterns.