## 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

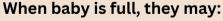


Late cues: baby cries, has fussy movements, becomes very upset

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**



- 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.

