Your Baby’s Hunger & Fullness Cues

Highlights

- All babies have common behaviors that signal their hunger or fullness.
- Fingers and fists in the mouth will often mean it’s time to eat.

Knowing when to feed

You’ll soon learn how to recognize your baby’s hunger signals compared to when he has other needs, such as a wet diaper. Not all babies do the exact same thing, but these guidelines are a good rule of thumb.

Hunger signs, listed from early to mid to late hunger cues

- Moves, licks or smacks his lips or makes sucking sounds
- Opens mouth wide when touched on his chin or lips and roots for a nipple
- Puts fingers or fist in his mouth, or sucks on fingers
- Squirms or moves his arms and legs
- Cries or is fussy
- Agitated body movements
Knowing when he’s full

Even as an infant, your baby knows when he is full. Don’t try to feed him more than he wants. He’s the best judge of when enough is enough.

Fullness signs

- Starts and stops feeding often, taking only a few sucks each time.
- Pushes away from the breast or bottle.
- Slows down pace and may fall asleep while feeding.
- Spits out or ignores nipple.
- Fidgets or easily distracted while feeding.

TOP TIP

Infants often just fall asleep when their tummies are full.