

# Cue-Based Feeding

**Cue-based feeding** means that you feed your baby when they show you signs that they are hungry. You also continue to feed your baby until they show signs that they are full. During cue-based feeding, watch your baby for the following behaviours, facial expressions, movements, and level of alertness.



## Signs your baby is ready to feed:

- Stirring or slowly waking from sleep.
- Awake or drowsy.
- Opening their mouth (**rooting**). This is different from a yawn. They may also turn their head towards your finger or their pacifier as you brush it against their lips or cheek.
- Moving their hands to their mouth.
- Stretching or moving their hands, arms, and legs.
- Turning their face towards their bed linens or their hands.
- Taking a pacifier and continuing to suck on it.



If your baby is fussy or starts to cry, these are late hunger cues. Try to calm your baby first by giving a pacifier and/or gently holding them before feeding.



## Signs your baby is full or needs a break:

- Holding their breath (apnea).
- Has tremors, twitches, or startles.
- Extending their arms, opening their hands wide, spreading their fingers.
- Arching and/or turning their head away from the breast or bottle.
- Has a floppy head, trunk and/or arms, legs.
- Falling asleep or is asleep.
- Hiccupping, yawning, or sneezing.
- Skin colour changes (pale, blue, blotchy).
- Crying or hard to console.
- Not latching onto the nipple.
- Sucking more slowly or stops sucking.



These signs are your baby's way of saying, "**Stop, I need a rest.**" If you see these signs, pause feeding and give them a break.

If your baby shows signs they are ready after a burp break, keep feeding. If the stop signs continue, stop feeding.



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If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to speak your baby's occupational therapist or any other member of your baby's healthcare team.



Images from: The U.S. Department of Agriculture Infant Nutrition (Team Nutrition).

Infant demonstrating rooting. Available from: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/usdagov/5135958310>.

Infant is turning head away from the bottle demonstrating a sign of fullness. Available from <https://www.flickr.com/photos/usdagov/51359575828>.

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**English:** This information is important! If you have trouble reading this, ask someone to help you.

**Italian:** Queste informazioni sono importanti! Se ha difficoltà a leggere questo, chiedi aiuto a qualcuno.

**Spanish:** ¡Esta información es importante! Si tiene dificultad en leer esto, pida que alguien le ayude.