

Hunger and Fullness Cues

How can you tell if your baby is hungry? Learn how hunger and fullness signs change as babies grow.

Age	Hunger Signs	Fullness Signs
<i>Birth through 5 months</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wakes and tosses • Sucks on fist • Cries or fusses • Opens mouth while feeding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seals lips together • Turns head away • Decreases or stops sucking • Spits out the nipple or falls asleep when full
<i>4 through 6 months</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cries or fusses • Smiles, gazes at caregiver, or coos during feeding • Moves head toward spoon or tries to swipe food towards mouth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreases speed of sucking or stops sucking when full • Spits out the nipple • Turns head away • May be distracted or pay more attention to surroundings
<i>5 through 9 months</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaches for spoon or food • Points to food 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eating slows down • Pushes food away
<i>8 through 11 months</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaches for food • Points to food • Gets excited when food is presented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clenches mouth shut or pushes food away
<i>10 through 12 months</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expresses desire for specific food with words or sounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shakes head to say “no more”
<i>1 to 2 years</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combines phrases with gestures such as “want that” and pointing • Can lead parent to refrigerator and point to a desired food or drink 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses words like “all done” and “get down” • Plays with food or throws food when full