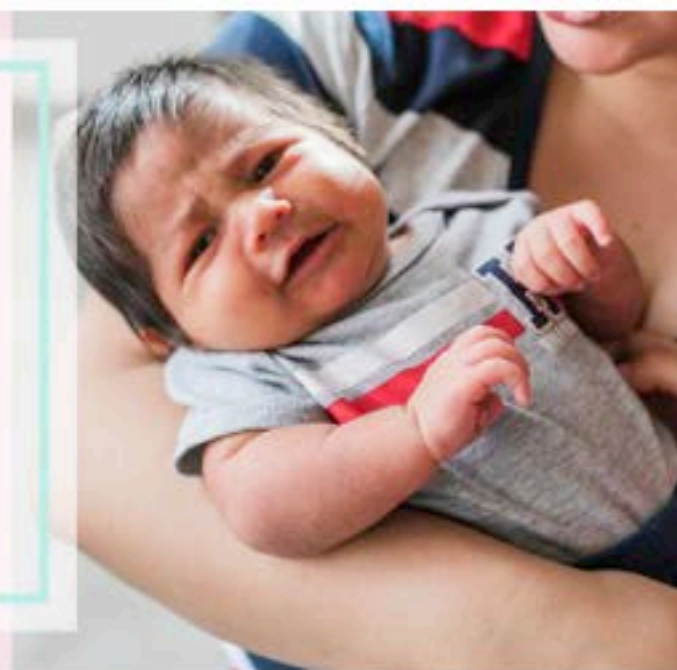


Hungry? Full?

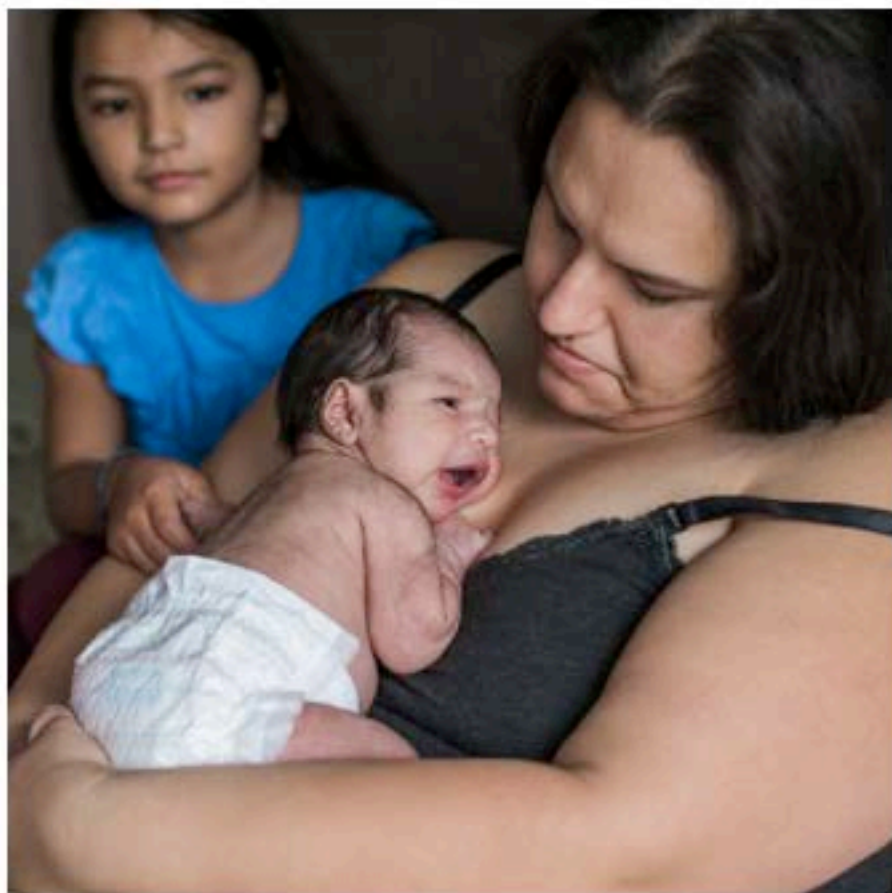
Understanding baby cues



Your baby will give you lots of cues at one time (called "clustered cues") when she needs to send you important messages like "I am hungry" or "I am full."

When your baby is hungry, she may...

Move her head, looking for something to suck on.



Pull her hands & knees upward toward her face.



Make sucking noises & try to suck on anything she can find.



If no one feeds her right away, she may start crying *while still using all the other cues*.

When you hear your baby cry, be sure to check for clustered hunger cues to make sure she is hungry.

Babies use clustered cues to show they are full, too.

Knowing when to stop feeding is just as important as knowing when your baby needs to eat.

Below you will see some cues your baby may show when she is full.

When your baby is full, she may...

Relax her muscles.



Slow down in her eating.



**Let her hands fall away
from her face.**



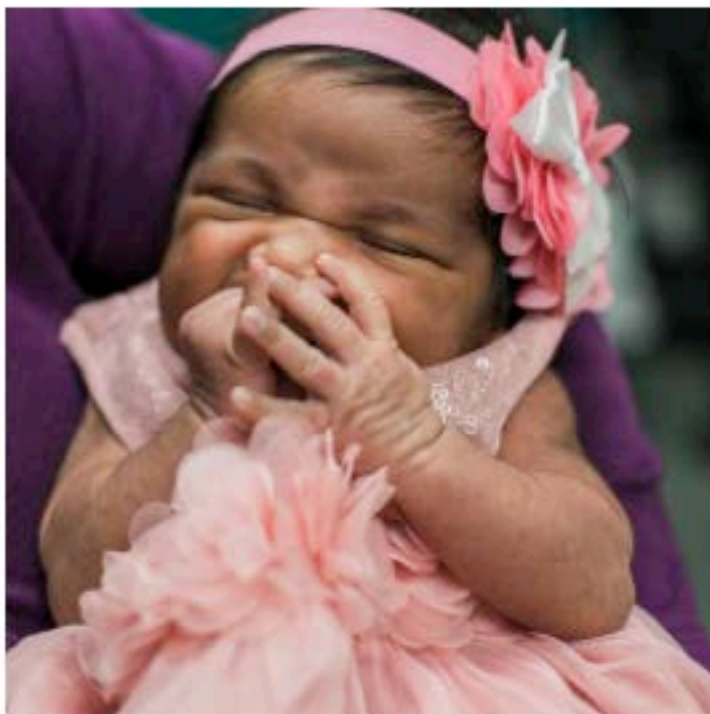
**Sometimes
fall asleep.**



RECOMMENDATION

[Check out this video](#) to see a baby's hunger and fullness cues in action!

[This 30-second video clip](#) shows and explains crying cues when babies are hungry.



How should I respond to my baby's hunger cues?

- **When you notice your baby's hunger cues early on, begin feeding her.** You will not have to worry about feeding your baby on a schedule. By feeding your baby when she alerts you that she is hungry, you can be sure she gets enough, and at just the right time.
- **If your baby's first hunger cues are missed, and she becomes upset, calm her before starting to feed.** If you have ever tried feeding a fussy baby, you know it is no easy task! Allow some time for her to calm down. Once she is soothed, she will take your breast or her bottle much more willingly.



How are cues different for bottle-fed babies?

Babies show they are hungry in similar ways whether they are breastfed or bottle-fed. The biggest difference is being able to tell when your baby is **full!** You cannot force a breastfed baby to eat if they are not hungry. This is because babies have to make an effort to get milk when breastfeeding. But when babies feed from a bottle, the milk flows right to their mouths, and they can easily overeat.

For this reason, it is important to practice ***paced bottle feeding*** (see Deeper Dive below). With paced bottle feeding, you notice when your baby's sucking slows or stops, and you allow her to come off the bottle. Then, you see if she [shows signs](#) she wants more. If she does not show these signs, you can end the feeding regardless of how much is left in the bottle.



DEEPER DIVE (WITH VIDEO)

Tips for Practicing Paced Bottle Feeding

Do not make your baby finish her bottle. When she is done eating, she will show you with her actions. When your baby turns her head away, slows or stops sucking, or closes her lips, she is full.

You may be concerned about being wasteful. Or maybe you are worried your baby is not getting enough. Both of these concerns are normal. It is hard when you feel you are wasting food. If your baby consistently does not finish her bottle, prepare an ounce or two less next time. Your baby will let you know when she wants more. It is important to help your child develop good eating habits from the start by allowing her to listen to her own fullness cues. Having her finish her bottle when she is not hungry can cause overeating. This can affect her eating patterns throughout life.

[This video shows what paced bottle feeding looks like.](#)