Why is responsive feeding important?

Even if they can’t talk yet, babies have all kinds of ways to tell you when they’re hungry, and when they’ve had enough. When your child sends signals that she is hungry or full, it’s important to respond promptly — and in a way that’s warm and loving.

This is called “responsive feeding,” and it’s a great way to help your child get a healthy start in life. Think of it like this: you provide, your child decides.

Responsive Feeding — Set Your Baby Up for Healthy Growth and Development!

Learn signs that your baby is hungry or full when he’s breastfeeding or bottle feeding.

When your baby is hungry, he may:

• Lean toward food and open her mouth
• Get excited when she sees food
• Root (turn his head toward anything that touches his face and open his mouth)
• Make sucking noises or motions
• Clench his fingers or fists over his chest and tummy
• Flex his arms and legs

When your baby is full, he may:

• Start and stop feeding often
• Unlatch often while breastfeeding
• Spit out or ignore the bottle or breast
• Slow down or fall asleep
• Fidget or get distracted easily
• Close his mouth or turn his head away when offered the breast or bottle

At first, feed your baby on demand. But as she proves older, you can start to build a routine. A regular feeding schedule makes it more likely that your child will be hungry at meal times.

For more information, visit www.healthychildren.org/growinghealthy.

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