

Infant feeding and relationships: Responsive Breastfeeding

Feeding Cues

Developed by Women's and Newborn Services
Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital

Early Cues - "I'm hungry"



Stirring



Mouth opening



Turning head
Seeking/rooting

Mid Cues - "I'm really hungry"



Stretching



Increasing physical
movement



Hand to mouth

Late Cues - "Calm me, then feed me"



Crying



Agitated body
movements



Colour turning red

Responsive breastfeeding supports the development of a reciprocal, close, loving relationship between you and your baby.

It means putting your baby to your breast whenever you want or when:

- ▶ baby shows feeding cues
- ▶ baby is distressed or lonely
- ▶ your breasts are full
- ▶ you simply want a sit down and cuddle

Breastfed babies cannot be overfed or 'spoiled' by frequent feeding. ©
UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative

What to look for:

Keep baby close to you so that you can recognise his feeding cues:

- ▶ rapid eye movements,
- ▶ sucking fingers and fists,
- ▶ rooting (opening their mouth as though they were about to breastfeed),
- ▶ moving and wriggling.

These are all signs that your baby is getting ready for a feed.

- ▶ Crying is the last sign of hunger and by then your baby may be too distressed to feed effectively. Try to soothe him before you offer a feed. Skin to skin contact is great for calming your baby at any time.

Infant feeding and relationships: Responsive Bottle feeding

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Responsive bottle feeding: the mother-baby relationship will be helped if mothers are supported to tune in to feeding cues and to hold their babies close during feeds.

It is best if just you and your partner feed baby in the early weeks to help her feel safe and secure, get used to your way of feeding and enable you to form a close loving bond

Tips for responsive bottle feeding

- ▶ Keep baby close to you so that you can recognise feeding cues.
- ▶ Hold baby close to you, in a slightly upright position.
- ▶ Look into baby's eyes and talk gently to her.
- ▶ Gently rub the teat above baby's top lip to encourage her to open her mouth and poke her tongue out.
- ▶ Place the teat into front of baby's mouth to allow her to draw it further in.
- ▶ Allow just enough milk to cover teat and pace the feed as your baby may want to slow down, pause, or stop.
- ▶ Offer breaks, removing the teat and holding baby upright to wind.
- ▶ Never force baby to take a whole feed as she will know when she has had enough.
- ▶ If baby is upset, try to soothe her before you offer a feed. Skin to skin contact is great for calming babies at any time and at any age.
- ▶ Discard any leftover milk.