When Should I Feed my Baby?

In the first days and weeks, your baby's tummy is small, so they need to feed often—**at least 8 times in 24 hours**. Frequent feeding gives your baby the milk they need and builds your milk supply.

Watch your baby, not the clock. Feed your baby based on their hunger cues, for as long and as often as they want. You cannot overfeed a breastfed baby.

Early cues: "I'm hungry" (stirring, mouth opening, turning head and seeking/rooting).

Try to feed your baby when they are showing these early hunger cues.

It is easier to learn a new skill when you are both calm.

Mid-cues: "I'm really hungry" (stretching, increasing physical movement, hand to mouth).

Feed your baby from one breast until they finish feeding (they may come off or fall asleep). You can then offer the other breast.

Try to alternate which breast you start with at each feed.

Late cues: "Calm me, then feed me" (crying, agitated body movements, colour turning red).

If your baby is showing these late hunger cues, calm them before trying to feed them.

Image: Queensland Government. (2020). Breastfeeding: Signs of hunger. Retrieved from: Signs of hunger | Health and wellbeing | Queensland Government (www.qld.gov.au)

Halton Baby-Friendly Initiative
Breastfeeding Basics

Need more support?

Visit babyfriendlyhalton.ca/support