



Is My Baby Getting Enough to Eat?

Your newborn should be nursing eight to 12 times per day during about the first month. In the beginning, mothers may want to try nursing 10-15 minutes on each breast, then vary the time as necessary.

Once your milk supply is established, breastfeeding should be "on demand" (when your baby is hungry), which is generally every 1-3 hours. As newborns get older, they'll need to nurse less frequently — some may feed every hour and a half, whereas others may go 2-3 hours between feedings. Babies who are getting formula will likely take about 2-3 ounces every 2-4 hours. Newborns should not go more than about 4 hours without feeding.

Call your baby's doctor if you need to awaken your newborn frequently or continually urge your baby to suck.

Most experts suggest you nurse or feed your baby whenever he or she seems hungry. Signs that babies are hungry include:

- moving their heads from side to side
- sticking out their tongues
- puckering their lips as if to suck
- showing the rooting reflex (when a baby moves its mouth in the direction of something that's stroking or touching its cheek)
- opening their mouths
- placing their hands and fists to their mouths
- nuzzling against their mothers' breasts

A rigid feeding schedule is not necessary; you and your baby will eventually establish your unique feeding pattern. Babies know (and will let their parents know) when they're hungry and when they've had enough. Watch for signs that your baby is full (slow, uninterested sucking; turning away from the breast or bottle) and stop the feeding once these signs appear.

As babies gain weight, they begin to eat more at each feeding and go longer between feedings. There may be other times when your infant seems hungrier than usual. Continue to nurse or feed on demand. Nursing mothers need not worry — breastfeeding stimulates milk production and your supply of breast milk will automatically adjust to your baby's demand for it. New mothers, especially breastfeeding moms, are often concerned that their infants may not be getting enough to eat.

You can be assured that your baby is getting enough to eat if he or she seems satisfied, produces about six to eight wet diapers a day, has regular bowel movements, sleeps well, is alert when awake, and is gaining weight. A baby who is fussing, crying, seems hungry, and does not appear satisfied after feeding may not be getting enough to eat. If you're concerned that your baby isn't getting enough to eat, call your doctor.

Many infants "spit up" a small amount after eating or during burping, but a baby should not vomit after feeding. This can be due to overfeeding, but vomiting after every feeding may be a sign of an allergy, digestive problem, or other problem that needs medical attention. If you have concerns that your baby is spitting up too much, call your doctor.

Although your baby will probably start on some solid foods between 4 and 6 months, breast milk or formula will remain the most important source of nutrition through the first year of life.

If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to give the nurses at Uinta County Public Health a call. 307-789-9203 or 307-787-3800 in the Bridger Valley.

Reference: <http://kidshealth.org>

