

Prenatal Education: Topic #7: Feeding On Cue

What is “feeding on cue”?

1. Feeding on cue simply means feeding your baby whenever he/she shows feeding cues.
2. Feeding cues are signs of hunger.
3. Feeding cues are: mouthing movements, tongue protruding, rooting, hand to mouth movements, hand-sucking.
4. Crying is a *late* hunger sign.
5. Feed baby *whenever* baby wants for as *long* as baby wants.



What are the advantages of feeding on cue?

1. Since sucking and emptying the breasts determines milk supply, feeding the baby as often and as long as the baby wants means you will make as much milk as the baby needs.
2. Frequent feeding in the first few weeks after birth builds up milk-making tissue in your breasts, assuring a good milk supply for months to come.
3. Baby latches and feeds better when you catch his early feeding cues such as tongue movements and rooting. If you wait until he is crying, it may take more time to calm him before feeding.
4. You bring comfort and pain relief to your baby when you feed on cue. Nursing is for comfort as well as nutrition. Babies cannot be held “too much” or “spoiled.”
5. Newborns are used to constant closeness and feeding. Frequent feedings gives them that connection.
6. Babies gain weight better.
7. Babies have less jaundice.
8. Mothers have less engorgement.
9. The overall duration of breastfeeding is longer.

Your baby prefers you. Avoiding pacifiers and bottles will help your baby breastfeed better.

1. The sucking action on a pacifier or bottle is very different from how a baby latches the breast.
2. When a baby sucks a pacifier or bottle, the breast does not get the stimulation to make milk.
3. Formula is difficult for baby to digest.



...to learn more, continue on the next page!

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Breastfeeding is the gift of a lifetime, a gift that only a mother can give.

Feeding cues are the signs your baby gives you to let you know he is ready to nurse.

- These are: mouthing movements, tongue protruding, rooting, hand to mouth movements, hand-sucking. These signs mean it is time to put your baby to breast. Crying is a late hunger sign. Try to feed baby before he/she gets too fussy. Calm baby down to get baby to latch better.

Let your baby nurse whenever he wants.

- That way, you will supply all he needs. Milk production functions in a cycle that starts with the baby: sucking and emptying the breasts calls in the order for milk. Your body responds to the baby by producing enough milk to satisfy the baby's needs. Frequent feeding causes your body to produce more milk.
- It is helpful to think about life from the baby's perspective, in fact, the baby doesn't know that he's born! When you were pregnant, your baby was fed and carried all the time. He heard your voice and heartbeat. He felt your motion and your warmth. After he is born, he is not ready to go several hours without feeding, or be content to be by himself. Nursing is comforting to your baby; more than just obtaining food! Babies feed frequently because they are growing a lot, their food is rapidly digested, and they need the closeness for comfort.
- During the first two weeks after delivery, your breasts are developing milk-making tissue. Frequent feedings make your body produce the hormones that increase this milk-making tissue. Developing a lot of milk-making tissue during this time will assure a good milk supply for many months to come.
- After the first two weeks, regulation of milk supply is solely based on supply and demand. Your body will make as much as your baby needs, so continue to feed according to baby's cues. Babies go through growth spurts when they will feed very frequently for a day or two, then your supply increases to meet his demand. These may occur at two weeks, six weeks, 3 months and 6 months. The more you nurse your baby, the more milk you make!



Let your baby nurse as long as he wants, and finish the first side first.

- At the beginning of the feeding, the baby gets the watery protein portion of the milk, called foremilk. Toward the end of the feeding, the baby gets the fat part of the milk, called hindmilk. This fat helps the baby feel full, gain weight, and sleep better.
- By letting the baby finish the feeding, you know that she got the fat-rich hindmilk. Baby is finished when she pops off the breast or falls asleep. Burp baby, then offer the second side.
- Baby may not take the second breast as long. Start on this breast at the next feeding.

There's nothing like Mom: Avoiding pacifiers and bottles will help you have a better milk supply.

- Your body does not know when your baby sucks on a pacifier or bottle, and does not get the signal to increase your milk supply.
- Sucking a pacifier or bottle is different than sucking at the breast. At the breast, baby's jaw is relaxed wide open, his lips are flanged out, and the tongue comes forward to bring in the milk. On a pacifier or bottle, baby's jaw is tight, his lips are pursed, and the tongue is bunched behind the nipple or pacifier. Once baby has sucked a bottle or pacifier, he make not latch well at the breast.
- Pacifiers mask feeding cues: you miss baby's feeding cues when he is sucking on a pacifier.
- Nursing is comforting for your baby. If baby remains fussy, check to see if she needs to be changed or burped. Other comfort measures are: swaddling, swinging, bouncing, rocking, walking, and making comforting sounds close to baby's ears such as singing, shushing, or talking.