

Topic #4: Feeding on Cue

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

What is “Feeding on Cue”?

- Feeding on cue simply means feeding your baby whenever they are ready to eat and show you feeding cues.
- **Feeding cues are:** mouthing movements, tongue protruding, rooting, hand to mouth movements or hand-sucking. These signs mean it is time to put your baby to breast. Try to feed baby before they get too fussy. Calm baby down to get baby to latch better.
- Crying is a *late* hunger sign.
- Feed baby *whenever* baby wants for as *long* as baby wants.

What Are the Advantages of Feeding on Cue?

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.”
- Newborns are used to constant closeness and feeding. Frequent feedings gives them that connection.
- Babies gain weight better and have less jaundice.
- Mothers have less engorgement and the overall duration of breastfeeding is longer.



Let Your Baby Nurse Whenever They Want.

- It is helpful to think about life from the baby’s perspective. In fact, the baby doesn’t know that he/she was born! When you were pregnant, your baby was fed and carried all the time. The baby heard your voice and heartbeat. The baby felt your motion and warmth. After the baby is born, they are not ready to go several hours without feeding or to be content by him/herself. 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, they have small stomachs and they need the closeness for comfort.
- 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 their demand. These may occur at two weeks, six weeks, three months and six months. The more you nurse your baby, the more milk you make!

Let Your Baby Nurse As Long As They Want, 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 they got the fat-rich hindmilk. Baby is finished when they release the breast or fall asleep. Burp baby, then offer the second side.
- Baby may not feed as long on the second breast. Start on this breast at the next feeding.
- It is normal for your baby to breastfeed often. Many feedings in the first few days help with hormone stimulation that helps breasts make more milk. Your baby will be happy to breastfeed often.

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, their lips are flanged out and the tongue comes forward to bring in the milk. On a pacifier or bottle, baby's jaw is tight, their lips are pursed and the tongue is bunched behind the nipple or pacifier. Once baby has sucked a bottle or pacifier, they may not latch well at the breast.
- Pacifiers mask feeding cues: you miss baby's feeding cues when they is sucking on a pacifier.
- Nursing is comforting for your baby. If baby remains fussy, check to see if they need 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.
- Early formula use even in small amounts can decrease your milk supply, interfering with feeding on demand and the baby's ability to latch effectively. It can also increase risk of ear infections, gastrointestinal illnesses and allergies.

Baby's Stomach Capacity:

Day	Approximate Stomach Capacity
1	Shooter Marble (5–7 ml)
3	Ping-Pong Ball (22–27 ml)
10	Extra-Large Chicken Egg (60–81 ml)
Adult	Softball

