



How Should My Baby Act?

The First Two Days:

The first day after birth, many babies are sleepy. They can have long sleeps and are awake for only very short periods. When they are awake and held, they should be contented. Their feeds can also be infrequent. Over the first two days, babies tend to gradually feed more frequently and for longer periods.

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After Day Three:

These babies will feed frequently. When babies are hungry, they start to root actively and make little noises that sound irritable. If left unfed, they gradually get more irritable and soon will start to scream. They quickly settle when put to the breast.

These babies feed every 2 to 3 hours (from feeding start to feeding start). That means they feed 8 to 12 times in 24 hours. Feeding has three stages:

"I'm starving": Their eyes are open, the suck pattern is many sucks with only short pauses. They also tend to choke in this stage once the milk is in.

"I really like this": The eyes are closed, they are really relaxed and the pattern is suck-suck-suck-suck pause. The pauses are getting longer and longer.

"I'm done": They are totally relaxed. They suck with suck-pause-suck-pause. They can let go on their own or are totally asleep and you will have to take them off.

The whole process takes about 20 minutes on each side and babies need both breasts at each feed. If they are on one side for more than 25 minutes, they should be moved to the other side. Total feeding time should not be more than one hour. When they are awake, they should be happy if held.

On day 3 or 4, your milk comes in. This is the change from colostrum to more mature milk. The breasts should be tender and significantly fuller. They can also become hard and painful. Once your milk is in, the breasts should change with nursing. They should be softer after feeds with fewer lumps and less heaviness.

Most newborn babies have a little sleep right after feeds. Sometimes they are awake for 10 to 30 minutes after feeds. However, after a little awake time, they may need to nurse to sleep. They communicate this by acting hungry. They nurse for 5 or 10 minutes and then fall asleep on the breast. This is normal. Some families misinterpret these little mini-feeds as a sign of not enough breast milk. If everything is going well, babies rarely cry.

Is my baby getting enough milk?

There are several ways to ensure that baby is getting enough to eat.

- Is the baby's feeding pattern normal?
- Is the baby happy when held? Baby should be happy or asleep after feeds. There should be several periods each day where the baby is happy and just looking around. If the baby only screams, eats and sleeps, he/she is probably not getting enough to eat. Pacifiers cover up the baby's hunger cues and should not be used.
- Are the baby's weights normal? Babies can lose weight initially. They should not lose more than 7% of their birth weight and should be back to birth weight by day 10. After that they should follow their growth curve.
- Is the baby stooling? Babies tend to stop stooling when they don't get enough to eat. Breastfed baby stool goes from black with the first stool, to green, and when the milk is in on day 3 to 4, to liquid mustard. They stool with almost every feed during the first month. Orange and green stools can also be normal.

Weeks 2 to 4:

- As they grow and develop, they spend more time awake and need to be held during their awake times. Babies are very immature and need extremely frequent contact and care. Most babies do not tolerate being put down. They quickly become upset and fuss or cry. They settle when held. This is normal.

One Month to Four Months:

- As babies grow, babies become more effective at feeding and will feed faster. They also become more distractible at the breast. Mothers will note that their breasts feel less full and that their milk is less rich in appearance. It is also harder for some mothers to pump their breasts. All these changes are normal.



- Between four and six weeks, many breastfed babies become unhappy and crabby during 2 — 3 hours in the evening. They tend to feed for very short periods, are hard to settle, and irritable. This is actually a very nice pattern as babies tend to have a longer sleep after their fussy periods. You lose your evenings but get the nights! These babies do not require any medical treatment. The evening fussies disappear by 4 to 5 months.

Babies' stooling changes after one month. The stools become pastier and happen less often. Some breastfed babies will only stool once per week when they are four and five months old.

More Than Four Months:

At this age, babies are very distractible. They look around and play while nursing. Their feeding duration varies a great deal with many of the day-time feeds being very short. The best feeds tend to be at night or when the baby is sleepy. Babies also tend to wake up more at night during the second six months of life. As they feed less during the day, they wake up more to eat during the night.

Some mothers misinterpret the shorter day-time feeds and increasing distractibility at the breast as a sign that the baby getting ready to wean. These are normal developmental changes and not a sign of weaning.

After four months, mothers usually only feel breast fullness if the baby has not nursed for a long period. This too is normal and not a sign of decreasing milk supply; mothers don't "lose their milk".