

# What is My Baby Trying to Tell Me?

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## UNDERSTANDING CUES

Your baby is able to tell you what she needs without words by using her body cues. Responding to her cues can help your baby be calm and happy.



### “I am hungry” cues

- Keeps her hands near her mouth
- Bends her arms and legs
- Makes sucking noises
- Puckers her lips
- Searches for the nipple (roots)

Now is the time to feed, before she gets too hungry.



### “I am full” cues

- Sucks slower or stops sucking
- Relaxes her hands and arms
- Turns away from the nipple
- Pushes away
- Falls asleep



These cues mean she's ready to stop eating.



### “I need something changed” cues

- Looks or turns away or arches her back
- Frowns or has a glazed look in her eyes
- Stiffens her hands, arms or legs
- Yawns or falls asleep

This means she is uncomfortable or bothered by something. Let her turn away or rest. Noise, lights, or too many people can be tiring for babies.

Notice the difference between “I am hungry” cues and “I need something changed” cues!



### “I want to be near you” cues

- Has a relaxed face and body
- Follows your voice and face
- Reaches toward you
- Stares at your face
- Raises her head

This means she's ready to interact, learn or play with you!

## UNDERSTANDING CRYING

It can be very upsetting for you when your baby cries. All babies cry sometimes. Your baby cries for many reasons, not just because he is hungry or needs a diaper change. There are things you can do to help your baby feel better.



- Stay calm and be patient.
- Use your baby's cues to try to find out what your baby is telling you.
- Hold your baby close and do the same calming thing over and over.
- Speak softly or sing over and over.
- Rock or sway your baby gently over and over.
- Massage her back, arms, and legs gently.



# UNDERSTANDING SLEEP

Place your baby to sleep on a firm surface, free of any objects, and on her back. Newborns fall asleep in light sleep and go into deep sleep in about 20 minutes.



## Light Sleep

- Wakes up easily
- Moves around and makes noises
- Has a lot of eye movement
- Dreams
- Brain grows and develops!



## Deep Sleep

- Doesn't wake up easily
- Has relaxed and floppy arms and legs
- Doesn't move very much
- Brain rests!

**Wait for signs of deep sleep before laying your newborn down.**



## Quick Tips for Parents

- Ask friends or family for help.
- Feed your baby when she lets you know she is hungry, not by watching the clock.
- Turn off lights and TV where your baby sleeps.
- Rest while your baby sleeps (even sitting quietly can help you feel more rested).
- If you start to feel angry or overwhelmed, put the baby down in a safe place and take a break.
- Contact your health care provider if you think your baby is crying too much.