

# Infant Feeding Milestones and Behaviors

Although all babies develop at different rates, this checklist will help you track their feeding milestones.

## 0 to 3 months

- Sucks and swallows well during feeding
- Communicates hunger cues, such as:
  - Puts hands in mouth
  - Makes sucking noises
  - Opens mouth when touched on the chin, cheeks or lips
  - Cries or fusses
- Communicates fullness cues, such as:
  - Starts to suck less or lets milk run down his/her mouth
  - Releases the bottle and looks satisfied
  - Seals lips closed
  - Uses bottle as a pacifier

## 4 to 6 months

- Develops good head and neck control
- Can sit with support
- Communicates hunger cues, such as:
  - Opens mouth when he/she sees bottle
  - Makes sucking noises, sucks on fingers or fist
  - Fidgets and squirms a lot
- Communicates fullness cues, such as:
  - Turns head away from bottle
  - Falls asleep during feeding
  - Releases the bottle or starts playing with it
- Shows interest in eating foods

*\*Solid food introduction should occur around 6 months, and only after baby has met the above milestones.*

## 6 to 7 months

- Opens mouth for spoon and closes mouth over spoon
- Moves pureed food from spoon into mouth and swallows it
- Communicates hunger cues, such as:
  - Opens mouth for spoon or bottle
  - Smiles or coos during feeding to show he/she wants more
- Communicates fullness cues, such as:
  - Turns head away or closes mouth when spoon or bottle approach
  - Pays attention to his/her surroundings more than feeding

## 7 to 9 months

- Helps hold bottle during feeding
- Takes sips from an open cup with help
- Eats thicker, mashed and lumpy foods with more texture
- Makes a face when trying new foods and tastes
- Feeds self with fingers
- Feeds self with pre-loaded baby utensils
- Communicates hunger cues, such as:
  - Uses sign language, like "eat" or "more"
  - Points to food
- Communicates fullness cues, such as:
  - Uses sign language, such as "all done"
  - Turns head or pushes food away

## 10 to 12 months

- Drinks from an open cup with help
- Feeds self with baby utensils (and fingers)
- Eats a variety of foods from each food group
- Eats 3 meals and 1 to 2 healthy snacks a day
- Transitions to chopped table foods
- Communicates hunger cues, such as:
  - Tries to get into highchair
  - Uses sign language
  - Looks for or points to food
- Communicates fullness cues, such as:
  - Shakes head "no"
  - Uses sign language
  - Pushes food away
  - Throws food on the ground

### Urge the family to contact the baby's doctor if:

- ✓ Baby coughs, chokes or experiences increased chest congestion after feeding (some gagging is normal and expected as baby tries new foods).
- ✓ Baby gets a mild rash or hives after feeding. Severe symptoms of a food allergy (severe hives, breathing problems, swelling and loss of consciousness) require immediate medical attention.
- ✓ You are concerned about baby's feeding milestones.
- ✓ Baby loses feeding skills he/she once had.