



NEWBORN

Signs your newborn is hungry vs. just fussy

Learn the subtle differences between hunger cues and general fussiness in your newborn. This guide helps you decode their signals so you can respond with confidence.

A free guide from maternity.app

Newborns communicate their needs in subtle ways, and it's not always easy to tell when they're hungry versus just fussy. This guide helps you recognize the differences so you can respond with confidence.

Start with the early hunger cues

- **Rooting.** Your baby turns their head toward your hand or chest when you stroke their cheek.
- **Sucking.** They make sucking motions or bring their hands to their mouth.
- **Smacking lips.** You might hear soft smacking or lip movements.

Watch for the late hunger signs

- ☐ Fussiness increases.
- ☐ Your baby starts crying loudly.
- ☐ They turn bright red or flail their arms.
- ☐ They arch their back or pull away.

What else could it be?

Sometimes fussiness isn't about hunger. Your baby might be tired, overstimulated, or uncomfortable. Check for other needs before assuming it's feeding time.

PRO TIP

Offer the breast or bottle even if you're not sure it's hunger. Your baby will often let you know if they're hungry by latching or refusing.

Trust your instincts, you're learning your baby's language together. With time, you'll recognize their cues with ease.