



Tips to Prevent Infant Overfeeding

Caring for a child is one of the most rewarding parts of life. However at times it may feel like the most challenging, especially when it comes to infant feeding. Since infants can't clearly tell us what it is they want or need, it is important for caregivers to look for the signals the infant sends. By learning the signals your child is sending, you will learn how much food he or she needs. This ultimately helps them develop healthy eating habits that may affect weight status later in life.

1. Establish a positive feeding relationship...

Parents are responsible for the "**what**" part of feeding. Infants are responsible for "**how often**", "**how much**", "**how fast**".

- Don't force or withhold food. Your infant will eat the amount and at the rate best for them
- This relationship affects the infant's acceptance of food and will help her/him develop healthy eating behaviors as he/she grow.

2. Recognize the hunger/fullness signals your infant is sending

Hunger Signals:

- Continues to cry after being picked up
- May "root" for the breast
- Opens mouth wide when offered bottle or breast
- Moves head forward toward breast, bottle or food
- Shows excitement when food is present
- May reach for food

Fullness Signals:

- Spits out nipple when full
- Stops sucking
- Acts settled and relaxed
- Slows down eating
- Closes mouth when offered bottle or food
- Plays with or throws food
- **Remember, it can take as little as 15-20 minutes for the baby to feel full.**

Infants often won't finish every bottle, and are not always hungry when they begin to cry; sometimes cuddling and attention may be all that is wanted.

Eating habits developed during infancy are carried into later years. When you allow your baby to eat when he/she is hungry and stop when he/she is full, you are helping to establish eating habits that will help maintain a healthy weight as they grow and into adulthood.



Prepared by Nutrition Education Program Staff – Brown County.

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