How Much to Feed Your Baby

Feeding your baby is a shared responsibility between you and your baby. It involves a balance between helping your baby to eat and letting your baby self-feed. Healthy babies know how much to eat. They are born that way. Some babies eat a lot. Some babies eat very little. Some days your baby eats more than on other days. Some days babies are more interested in sleeping or playing. This is all normal.

“How do I know how much to feed my baby?”

This is part of getting to know your baby. Babies let you know how much they need to eat. They turn their heads or spit food out when they have had enough. They demand more food when they haven’t had enough. Listen to your baby. Start small and let them come back for more. Let your baby decide how much to eat. Be sensitive to changes in your baby’s physical and emotional state.

“How do I know if my baby is getting enough to eat?”

Your baby will let you know. Babies are probably getting enough when they have a lot of energy, and are usually happy, healthy and well. A baby’s body is usually like the parents’. Smaller parents often have smaller babies. Do not force your baby to eat. Offer healthy food at regular times during the day. Eat together so baby can learn by copying you. Your baby will know how much to eat.
“What do I do if baby is fussy and not hungry?”

If your baby is upset but not hungry, try to find ways other than giving food to make your baby feel better; like cuddling, singing and playing with them. This will help baby learn that food is not the solution for problems.

“I’m afraid my baby will get fat.”

Babies come in different sizes and shapes. This is normal. The best way to make sure your baby is a healthy weight is to:

- offer healthy food
- let your baby decide how much to eat
- do not hold back food from your baby
- make sure your baby has lots of chances to be active.

Babies should not have candy, tea, coffee, pop, chocolate, honey or sugar.

Choose foods grown or produced in BC whenever you can.

Other fact sheets are available at your local Community Health Office/Centre or online:

Vancouver Coastal Health: http://vch.eduhealth.ca - search ‘baby food’
See also “Baby’s First Foods” http://www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthfiles/hfile69c.stm
Or call:
- Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC - call 8-1-1 to speak to a dietitian or go to www.healthlinkbc.ca/dietitian/ to email your question.
  Translation services are available in 130 languages.
- A Public Health Nurse at Vancouver Coastal Health: www.vch.ca
- VCH Parenting Website: http://parenting.vch.ca