

Hunger is when you are hungry

If babies' or children's moods are irregular, we can expect their eating habits to be irregular too. Hunger is simply unpredictable, and therefore our obsession and insistence about it is forcing and interfering with very basic physiological needs. The fact that eating is regular when one is living regularly -- as conditioned, socially adapted adults -- doesn't mean that eating, or living, should be regular.

We all talk about "gut feelings," but few of us really appreciate the amazingly strong connections between the brain and the digestive system. The stomach and intestines actually have more nerve cells than the entire spinal cord, leading some experts to call the digestive system a "mini brain." A highway of nerves runs directly from the real brain to the digestive system, and messages flow in two directions. Consider this: 95 percent of the body's serotonin -- a hormone that helps control mood -- is found in the digestive system, not the brain.

['Stress and the Digestive System'](#)

You don't need to do anything to feed the child. The child knows very well what he or she wants and when. Simply be aware, communicate, find out, and respond appropriately, respectfully, as equals.