

## Feeding the Baby Born Before 38 weeks

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**Late Preterm** infants are **born between 34 0/7 to 36 6/7 weeks gestation**. These infants are immature, and may be sleepier and have more difficulty with latch, suck, and swallow than a full-term infant. Many infants born at this gestation are not able to consistently feed well until they reach full-term age between 38 to 40 weeks gestation.

**Early Term** infants are born **between 37 0/7 to 37 6/7**. While some of these infants are able to demonstrate signs of effective feeding (deep latch, strong suck and audible swallows), others demonstrate feeding behaviors similar to late preterm infants. Your lactation consultant or nurse will assess a feeding to determine if this plan is appropriate for your infant.

### How do I know if my infant is breastfeeding enough?

Signs of adequate intake that let you know your infant is breastfeeding effectively are:

Age	Urine and Stool	Weight loss
Birth-24 hours	1 urine and 1 stool	Less than 3 %
24-48 hours	2 urine and 2 stools	Less than 7%
48 -72 hours	3 urine and 3 stools	Less than 7 %

**The following recommendations will help you and your Late Preterm/ Early Term infant get off to a good start with breastfeeding:**

- Practice **skin to skin contact** with your infant as soon as possible after birth, and as much as possible thereafter
- Attempt breastfeeding within your infant's first hour of life.

- Encourage your infant to feed whenever they are giving hunger cues (**thrusting the tongue, licking lips, bringing hands to the mouth**). Crying is a late sign of hunger.
- Sometimes, it may be necessary to wake your infant if they do not give hunger cues, which is not unusual in the late preterm infant. Your infant **should be breastfed 8-12 times per 24-hour period, or every 2-3 hours**.

**The following feeding plan will help ensure your infant is getting enough milk:**

- Use **breast compression** to help increase the flow of milk from your breast. Listen for audible swallowing.
- Wake your infant and offer breastfeeding every 2-3 hours. Your infant should latch well and **suckle for at least 10-15 minutes**.
- **Your infant will need to be supplemented after breastfeeding** with expressed breast milk or formula until they are able to demonstrate signs of effective feeding (strong suck with audible swallows).
- “After” each breastfeeding session, we recommend that you offer your infant **at least** the following additional amounts of milk:

First 24 hours of life	25-48 hours of life	49 -72 hours of life	73-96 hours of life
5-10 ml Every 2-3 hours At least 8 times a day	10-30 ml. Every 2-3 hours At least 8 times a day	15-30 ml. Every 2-3 hours At least 8 times a day	30 ml. or more every 2-3 hours At least 8 times a day <i>Increase as needed</i>

**If your infant still seems hungry after feeding, offer more supplement**

- Depending on your infant’s age and feeding history, the above volume recommendations may need to be adjusted. Your lactation consultant, nurse or health care provider can assist you in making this decision.
- You may supplement your baby using a spoon, cup, supplemental nursing device or paced bottle method depending on your infant’s condition and your personal preference. Please ask your lactation consultant or nurse to assist you in deciding which supplemental method is best for you and your infant.
- **Pump your breasts** with a quality double electric breast pump after every feeding for **15-20 minutes every 2-3 hours**. This step is vital in order to establish an adequate supply of breast milk until your infant is transferring milk well directly from the breasts.
- **The first 2 weeks postpartum are a “Critical” time in lactation.** As a result of hormonal changes, copious milk production begins around 72-96 hours after delivery (about 3-4 days). At this time, milk production continues to increase if milk is removed from your breasts frequently. If your infant is having breastfeeding difficulties and is not able to empty your breasts with feedings (every 2-3 hours), then it is vital that you use your breast pump for **15-20 minutes every 2-3 hours** in order to establish and maintain enough breast milk to feed your infant.
- See your infant’s primary care provider within 1-2 days after discharge, for continued supplementation advice.

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