

Was your baby born a little bit early?

Are you wondering how that might affect your feeding journey?

If your baby was born a little bit early (at between 34 and 36 weeks of pregnancy):

They are likely to be able to breastfeed (or bottle feed), but often need extra support to get things off to a good start.



They are likely to get tired more quickly than most babies and they might be quite sleepy.

In the first days they will need blood sugar checks and they might have jaundice.



They usually need to stay in hospital for a few days or more.

Babies on the smaller and earlier side might need to have a tube placed into the nose to give milk into the stomach while they learn how to breastfeed (or bottle feed).



What is colostrum?

Colostrum is the first milk your body makes after birth. It comes in small amounts and is full of goodness to protect your baby against infections.

After 2-3 days your milk should 'come in', so there is more of it and it will be a whiter colour.

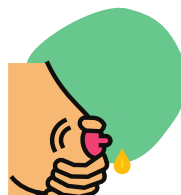
Getting things off to the best start:

Offer your baby their first feed in the first hour after birth.

Expect to feed your baby very often in the first days and weeks (for example, at least 8 times in 24 hours, often much more).

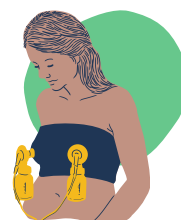


Try and have lots of skin to skin contact with your baby, for as long and as often as you want.



It is usually helpful to express milk in the first days and weeks, as well as breastfeeding.

This helps to establish your milk supply and you can give the milk to your baby if needed.



You may need to wake your baby up to feed. At the beginning they shouldn't go more than three hours without feeding.

Your midwife will help you with how to wake them.

Is it going well?

The best way to know if your baby is getting enough milk is to look at how many wet and dirty nappies they have, and how they grow.

In the first few days after being born, 2-3 wet nappies each day is reassuring.

After the first few days, it is reassuring when babies are having at least six heavy wet nappies each day.



Finding out more:

You can watch a video of how to hand express milk here:



If you want to use a breast pump, your midwives will show you how.

If you want to feed your baby formula, or breastmilk in a bottle, your midwives will show you how to do this responsively.

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