

Was your baby born a little early? (at 34-36 weeks of pregnancy)

Are you wondering how that might affect your feeding journey?



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

They are likely to be able to breastfeed (or bottle feed)

They are likely to get tired more quickly than most babies and they might be quite sleepy. You are likely to need extra support with getting feeding off to a good start

In the first days they will need blood sugar checks and they might have jaundice. This means they often need to stay in hospital for a few days or more, or come back to hospital after going home

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

What you can do to get things off to the best start:

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

Expect to feed to 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, right from when they are born and for as long 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

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

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 are planning to use a bottle to feed your baby, your midwives will show you how to do this responsively

