

Have you been told that your baby might be born early?

Are you wondering how that might affect your feeding journey?

If your baby is born a little 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** when feeding. You may need extra support with feeding.

In the first hours or days they will need **blood sugar** checks.

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

Babies on the smaller and earlier side in this group 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).

If your baby is born earlier (before 34 weeks of pregnancy):

They **are not likely** to be able to directly breastfeed (or bottle feed) at first - but can get your milk through a tube into the stomach when they are ready.

They will have **blood sugar** checks.

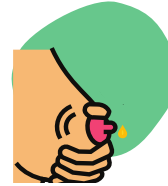
A baby born at 31 weeks is usually in hospital for about a month. A baby born at 27 weeks is usually in hospital for about three months.



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 if your baby is able to breastfeed at birth:

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).

You may need to wake them to feed in the first days. At the beginning they shouldn't go more than **three hours** without feeding.



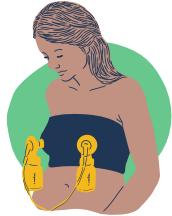
Try and have lots of **skin to skin** contact with your baby, for as long and as often as you want.

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

Getting things off to the best start if your baby is not able to breastfeed at birth:

Start trying to express milk **within 2-6 hours of giving birth**.

People who express within 6 hours of birth have more milk in the coming days.



What next?

If your baby can't breastfeed, try to express **eight times a day** or more. Try not to leave gaps of more than **six hours** between sessions, including at night.

Have as much **'skin to skin'** contact with your baby as you can.

Get help early: if you are expressing less than 50ml on day four after birth, ask for more help from your nurses and midwives

Expressing milk:

Expressing can be done with your hands or a pump. Your midwife will show you what to do.

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



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