



Breastfeeding  
Committee  
for Saskatchewan

[www.thebcs.ca](http://www.thebcs.ca)

### IMPORTANT

Hand express/pump after feeds to build and maintain a good supply even if your baby is breastfeeding. Often a late preterm baby's suck is not as strong or effective until they get to their full term age.

Side (football) or cross cradle holds are often more effective for your late preterm to drink easily.

Offer expressed or pumped breast milk to your baby until they are strong enough to drink from the breast on their own.

### For further information contact:

Local Public Health Nurse

International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC)

Local breastfeeding support Group

Saskatchewan HealthLine 811

#### References:

Breastfeeding the Late Preterm Infant: ABM Clinical Protocol #10; 2011

Breastfeeding your Premature Baby – Fact Breastfeeding Committee for Saskatchewan

<http://newborns.stanford.edu/Breastfeeding/MaxProduction.html>

## Breastfeeding your Late Preterm Baby

(Babies born between 35 and 38 weeks gestation)

**Although late preterm infants may be born healthy they may need more help to establish breastfeeding** because they:

- 1) have more difficulty staying warm,
- 2) may have lower energy stores,
- 3) may be sleepy or tire easily,
- 4) may have a weaker suck and lower muscle tone,
- 5) may have a smaller mouth and/or may not be able to suck and swallow well.

Skin to skin care helps baby learn to breastfeed. To do skin to skin place baby on Mom's bare chest as soon as possible after birth and then on mom or dad's chest frequently in the days to follow.

**Skin to Skin Care** is very important for many reasons:

- 1) Your body will provide just the right amount of warmth.
- 2) It allows you to watch for early feeding cues.
- 3) It is natural for baby as your body is baby's home. They will cry less.
- 4) Baby can feel, smell and hear you.
- 5) Skin to skin care as little as 30 minutes per day can increase your milk supply.

**BREASTFEEDING PLAN:** Although every baby is different this is a guide to assist with breastfeeding a late preterm infant.

- Frequent skin to skin care. Watch for early feeding cues such as: stretching and yawning, rooting, hands to mouth, tongue movements, suckling. Crying is a late sign.
- Offer your breast to your baby as soon as possible after birth and frequently thereafter. Let baby smell, lick and taste expressed colostrum.
- Find a position that is comfortable for both you and your baby. You may find football/clutch hold, cross cradle or laid-back nursing all effective ways to position your late preterm baby.
- Offer your breast whenever baby is cueing, or at least 8 times in 24 hours.
- Watch for signs that baby is drinking well. You feel good tugs on the areola (without pain). You see your baby's jaw moving up into the temple area and you hear swallows (a "ca" sound).
- Use breast compression or massage the breast during the feed to help baby move more colostrum or breast milk. This also encourages your baby to suckle longer.
- Add hand expressing and or pumping as needed to build and maintain a good milk supply. Offer expressed/pumped milk to your baby until baby reaches full term age. Talk with your health care provider to discuss a plan.

**Frequent breastfeeding is important for late preterm infants who lack the stamina to drink effectively and to help build and maintain your supply.**

For more information contact your local public health office, a lactation consultant or your health care provider.