Babies in the Special Care Nursery have usually progressed from intravenous therapy to intragastric (IG) tube feeds with their mother’s expressed breast milk (EBM) to breastfeeds. Babies progress through these steps at different rates depending on their condition and maturity.

Gradually your baby will show signs that he or she is ready for sucking feeds. These signs include sucking on the IG tube, a dummy or even their hands.

At first babies might only have enough energy to suck one or two feeds a day. They will sometimes feed very well and at other times be quite sleepy. This is normal until your baby gets older and closer to going home.

As babies grow they will slowly progress from hourly feeds to feeding every four hours. This longer period between feeds will encourage your baby to become hungrier and to wake for feeds. As the days and weeks pass your baby will gradually wake more and demand breastfeeds.

It is important that you visit your baby more often as they near the time for discharge so you feel comfortable and confident with your breastfeeding and other baby care activities.

As the number of breastfeeds increases you may gradually reduce the number of times you express. The stimulation of your baby sucking from your breast will promote a good supply.