



Breast Feeding in Newborn Care

Babies in Newborn Care will either have progressed from Intravenous therapy or Intra-gastric tube feeds before they go on to breastfeeding. Initially they will receive your breastmilk via a tube in their nose/mouth and once your baby is showing interest in suck feeds and breathing by themselves we will attempt latching baby to your breast. The nurses or lactation consultant will help you at these first breastfeeds.

You will already be very familiar with baby being on your chest as we encourage all of the babies in Newborn Care to have lots of skin-to-skin or as it is more commonly called kangaroo Care. This happens soon after birth as soon as baby is stable.

At first baby might only have enough energy to have one or two breastfeeds per day. Sometimes they will breastfeed very well and other times they may be quite sleepy.

This is normal until your baby gets closer to going home. As your baby grows and becomes more mature he will wake for more feeds per a day until eventually he will be able to do all breastfeeds in a 24 hour period. When he can suck all of his feeds he will more than likely be ready to go home particularly if he is having good weight gains.

It is important to visit your baby in the Newborn Care as often as possible, especially as they near the time for discharge, so you can feel confident with breastfeeding prior to taking your baby home. We will also expect that you do lots of the other care for your baby such as bathing, nappy changes, taking baby's temperature and even giving any medications that your baby requires. This way you will learn how to care for your baby fully prior to his discharge.

Until after your baby goes home you should still express milk after breastfeeds as this ensures you will always have an adequate milk supply for your baby as he grows. The lactation consultants will recommend an expressing schedule on discharge that safely transitions from a hospital driven routine to one that your baby regulates with his breastfeeding. This is known as demand or baby-led feeding and may take several weeks after discharge to be established.