

Late Preterm Baby

Term deliveries occur between 37-42 weeks. Late preterm babies are born between 34-37 weeks. If your baby is born before 36 weeks, they will go to the NICU. There are many reasons why babies are born early. Sometimes, your doctor may decide to put you into labour. Other times, it could be due to you going into early labour on your own.

Late preterm babies need to be watched closely and stay in the hospital for longer than term babies. This is because they are more likely to be brought back to the hospital if they go home too early. In the first few days of life, late preterm babies are more likely to have low temperature, low blood sugar, breathing problems, jaundice, and feeding problems.

You can expect these things to make sure baby is healthy:

- Often stay in hospital for about 72 hours
- Lots of temperature, heart rate, and breathing checks for your baby
- At least 8-9 blood sugar checks for your baby over the first 36 hours
- Jaundice checks for your baby
- Making sure your baby is feeding well
- Daily weight checks for your baby

Questions from Parents:

Q: If my baby gets low blood sugar, how would you treat it?

A: We would give your baby breastmilk or formula. Your healthcare team may also decide to give a dextrose medication.

If you do not have enough breastmilk yet, formula and donor breastmilk are both feeding options. Ask your nurse about donor breastmilk.

Q: What if my baby gets a low temperature?

A: We would ask you to hold your baby on your skin or we will take your baby to the baby warmer.

Q: What if my baby is not feeding well? What happens if my baby loses too much weight?

A: Feeding your baby can be hard! It often gets better with practice and time. Ask your nurse to help you. If your nurse thinks you need even more help, we will have a lactation consultant come see you after your baby is 24 hours old. There are many ways to feed your baby. If you are interested in donor breastmilk, please speak with your nurse.

Q: What if my baby gets jaundice?

A: We may treat it in the hospital using lights. This may mean that you and your baby need to stay in the hospital for longer than 72 hours or until your baby's jaundice levels go down.

Q: What happens if my baby or I are having problems?

A: We may decide to keep you in hospital for a bit longer to make sure you and your baby are healthy or have a plan before you go home.