

My baby is ready to learn to breastfeed.

What can I expect?

Congratulations, your daughter has come so far during her hospital course and is progressing nicely!



Premature babies and full-term babies in the NICU often do not have the skills to feed well by mouth right away. Your baby will need to continue to grow, learn, get stronger, and, with time, her feeding skills will improve.

It is important to establish breastfeeding early. Your baby will need lots of practice, so do not get discouraged as learning to breastfeed takes time. During this time, a lactation consultant will meet with you to discuss your milk supply and evaluate your baby's latch and sucking pattern as you practice this new skill together. The lactation consultant will determine when to start performing test weights with breastfeeding sessions.

What is a test weight?! Weighing your baby will help us determine how much she eats. She will be weighed on a special scale both before and after her breastfeeding session. The **change** in her weight indicates how much milk she ate. The amount of milk she eats at the breast will help your medical team determine:

- How much milk to give through the NG tube
- How frequently test weights should be performed, and
- When a lactation consultant should meet with you again

Eating takes practice. It may take weeks for a baby to mature and be strong enough to eat well by breast or bottle.

This part of the hospital stay may feel quite challenging. Learning to breastfeed will not delay your baby's discharge and we will work with you to ensure breastfeeding comfort for you and your daughter prior to discharge.