

Created Mar 13, 2023

Definition of late preterm

Late preterm babies are those born between 34w0 and 36w6. These babies are at higher risk for hypothermia, hypoglycemia, excessive weight loss, jaundice, and breastfeeding failure.

In hospital

- Promote skin to skin with mom as much as possible.
- Attempt breastfeeding or hand express colostrum in the first hour after birth.
- See an LC in hospital if able.
- Baby will need to be closely monitored for hypoglycemia, jaundice and weight loss.
- Start hands on pumping every 2-3 hours preferably with a double electric pump. Supplementation will be needed for late preterm babies so early and often breast stimulation is necessary.

Ongoing

- Consider a nipple shield if there are signs of ineffective milk transfer.
- Supplementing after breast feeds for late preterm is important. Their oral buccal strength and suck/swallow coordination is not mature yet. **
- Doing pre and post test weights will tell us if the baby is becoming more efficient at removing milk from the breast. Late preterms tend to look like they are feeding well at the breast but when weighed are not actually taking what they require.**
- The breastfeeding parent should be encouraged to pump post 6 feeds/ day.
- If the baby is not coming to breast at all, pump at least 8 x/ day with hands on pumping.

In clinic

- Reinforce feeding often (8-12x day). Limit breastfeeds to 30-40 min so that the baby does not get too tired. Will require top ups.
- It is important though exhausting to triple feed. It is highly recommended for the first 2 weeks of life as the breastfeeding parent is establishing their milk supply. If skipping one of the parts to triple feed it should be bringing the baby to breast.
- consider galactogogues
- Reinforce watching output and sleepiness closely.
- Encourage recorded feeds, top up amounts and output.
- Avoiding > 7% weight loss for a preterm baby.
- Weekly appointments until the baby is 40 weeks corrected.
- Iron supplementation (elemental iron 2 to 4 mg/kg daily, maximum 15 mg) until 6months age

**** Not all late preterm babies act the same and some small full term babies will act like late preterms****

References

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