



**Definitions**

- GA: gestational age at birth
- Late preterm: GA 34 weeks 0 days to 36 weeks 6 days
- Early term: GA 37 weeks 0 days to 38 weeks 6 days
- Term: GA 39 weeks 0 days to 40 weeks 6 days

**Characteristics of Late Preterm Infants**

- Low birth weight
- Low body fat
- Poor thermoregulation
- Low glycogen stores
- Low tone
- Poor state regulation
- Immature immune system
- Immature suck and swallow
- Delay in bilirubin metabolism

**Late Preterm Infants Are at Risk For:**

- Hypothermia
- Hypoglycemia
- Sepsis
- Poor feeding and infrequent feeds can lead to inadequate maternal milk supply
- Breast feeding failure
- Poor suck and swallow may lead to inadequate milk intake
- Excessive weight loss, failure to thrive
- Hyperbilirubinemia with late rise (expect peak on DOL 5)
- Increased readmission rate (5-13 times that of term infants)
- Respiratory instability in upright car safety seats or other upright infant devices
- Hospital readmission

**Feeding Plan**

Infants meeting any of the following criteria should be assessed for the need for supplementation:

- Birth weight <2500 grams
- Poor reserve (evidenced by temperature instability or hypoglycemia)
- Poor feeding (LATCH <7 or <10 minutes at breast)
- Weight loss >3% per day or >8% total

**If Breastfeeding**

- Lactation evaluation within 24 hours of birth.
- LATCH score** documented at least Qshift.
- Infant should be put to breast at least Q3h.
- Use Supplemental Nursing System (SNS) **to ensure measurable amounts each feed with the following volumes:**

0-24 hours: 5-10 mL  
 25-48 hours: 10-20 mL  
 29-96 hours: 20-30 mL

**Supplementation**

- Supplementation should be given by SNS (preferred), cup, or finger feeds rather than nipple and bottle. May receive formula if milk volume not meeting fluid needs.
- Mother to pump every 3 hours after nursing unless infant nursing vigorously.
- Bedside nurse and medical team should re-evaluate feeding plan daily.

This guideline is designed for the general use of most patients but may need to be adapted to meet the special needs of a specific patient as determined by the medical practitioner. Approved by MSEC 8/3/21. Click [here](#) to see the supplemental resources for this guideline. If comments about this guideline, please contact Amy\_Carson-Strnad@ykhc.org.