



**NCCU CLINICAL GUIDELINES**  
**SECTION: 7**

**BREAST FEEDING**

Section: 7 Breast feeding  
Increasing the number of breast feeds  
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Neonatology Clinical Guidelines  
King Edward Memorial/Princess Margaret Hospitals  
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## **INCREASING THE NUMBER OF BREASTFEEDS**

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It is important to increase breastfeeding opportunities as the infant demonstrates increasing energy reserves. Increase at a pace that matches the infant's ability to attach and suckle at the breast. The infant will demonstrate increased interest in sucking by eliciting signs of readiness to suck.

Signs of readiness to suck may occur as early as 30 - 32 weeks gestation but generally occurs from 34 weeks gestation onwards as the ability to coordinate sucking, swallowing, and breathing improves at this time. Discuss with the mother the need to increase the number of breastfeeds. Explain semi-demand feeding and the need for her to be available, as her infant may be interested in feeding again less than three hours following a breastfeed. Ensure that the mother is aware of the hospital crèche facilities, parent lounge / accommodation, and kitchen / dining room meals.

It is preferable that orogastric tubes be replaced with nasogastric tubes when the infant shows increased readiness to suck and there are no respiratory symptoms. This facilitates the correct sucking action and is likely to occur around 30 – 32 weeks. Where this is not possible, the OGT should be taped to the top lip.

It may be appropriate to give bottle feeds of EBM if the mother is unavailable to breastfeed when her infant is demanding e.g. at night. Although generally not <34/40 corrected age unless first discussed/consulted with neonatologist and lactation consultant/midwife.

**ALWAYS NEGOTIATE AND REVIEW THE FEEDING PLAN WITH THE MOTHER AND  
DOCUMENT ON A BREAST FEEDING CARE PLAN.**

### **RECOMMENDED FURTHER READING**

- J. Riordan, K. Wambach. Breastfeeding and Human Lactation 4th Edition, 2009.
- R. Mannel, P.J. Martens, M. Walker (Eds). Core Curriculum for Lactation Consultant Practice. 3rd Edition, 2012.
- W. Brodribb (Ed). Breastfeeding Management, 4th Edition, 2012.
- R. Lawrence, R. Lawrence. Breastfeeding: A Guide for the Medical Profession 7th Edition, 2010.