

5 Top Tips For...

TRANSITIONING A TUBE FED BABY TO THE BREAST

Begin slowly, premature babies are often ready to begin suckling around 32-34 weeks gestation and though they may not be ready to take in a whole feed this 'non-nutritive' suckling is really important.

Get support from the neonatal team to gradually transition from tube to the breast. This might involve spacing out tube feeds, reducing the amount in the tube feeds and mum or parent being called when baby is rooting!



Have as much skin to skin and practice feeding time as possible. Be patient with the process, it may take a while for baby to learn to coordinate breathing, suckling and swallowing.

Give yourself time when it comes to taking out the tube, it's normal for premature babies to still need some top up feeds for a while as they can tire out very easily.

Get skilled support with latching. Premature babies often have small mouths and it's really important to get experience breastfeeding support to ensure that position and attachment is optimal. Global Health Media have a series of videos on feeding small babies.