# Breastmilk fortifiers and your preterm baby

While your baby is in the neonatal nurseries, you need to give your baby breastmilk. You may need to have a fortifier added to your breastmilk for extra nutrition for your baby. This handout gives you information about breastmilk fortifiers.

## Why is breastmilk important for my preterm baby?

Breastmilk is important for your preterm baby because it has many nutrients and antibodies. These will help your baby grow and help prevent infections. But sometimes, breastmilk alone is not enough nutrition for a preterm baby. You may need to have a fortifier added to your breastmilk.

## What is a fortifier?

A fortifier supplies the extra nutrients such as vitamins, minerals, protein and calories that preterm babies need. This will help your baby to grow better and develop stronger bones.

A fortifier is a powder that is added in small amounts to your breastmilk. The amount is increased gradually until the correct amount for your baby is reached.

Fortifiers are lactose-free and have protein from cow's milk similar to other formulas. Research has shown fortifiers to be safe effective and well tolerated for preterm babies.

## Does my baby need to have a fortifier?

Your baby may need to have a fortifier if he or she was less than 34 weeks and 2000 grams at birth.

## Will a fortifier give all the extra nutrients my baby needs?

Your baby will also need to take an iron supplement for the first year of his or her life. Your baby may also need to take a vitamin supplement. The health care team will advise you about the need for extra supplements.

## How long will my baby need the fortifier?

As your baby starts to breastfeed, your baby will need less fortifier. After the fortifier is stopped, the health care team will assess your baby's nutrition and will decide if other supplements are needed based on your baby's feeding and growth.

If you have any questions or concerns, please ask to speak to the dietitian.

## Questions for dietitian:

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