

Patient information

Your baby's development: 34 - 36 weeks gestation

This is a factsheet to explain the developmental milestones you could expect to see in your baby at this stage of their development. Please do ask your neonatal nurse if you have any questions and you can also always discuss any concerns in regards to development on the ward rounds with the consultant paediatricians or physiotherapists as well.

<p>Physical</p>	<p>Babies born within these weeks of gestation acquire a certain degree of immunity from their mother. The bones have become stronger although the skull remains soft. Your baby will be able to move their arms and legs fairly strongly and smoothly. Their hands can be found, being put into their mouth in order to suck their fingers. They can hold their head off the chest for a few seconds. The grasp reflex is becoming more developed and they will be able to hold your finger, at this stage more freely. In the womb the fluid is breathed in by the baby and this exercises the lung ready for birth and breathing in air. The lungs are almost fully developed at this stage of development. On your scan you may have seen your baby turn upside down getting themselves ready for the birth, showing more movement and control. Their toe nails have now reached the end of their toes.</p>
<p>Intellectual</p>	<p>Their sight can now be just as good as those babies born at term, showing interest in faces and black and white patterns. Your baby will now recognize their parent's voices and they may show signs of wanting to 'coo' (talk) back. Their taste buds are highly sensitive at this stage in development and they know the difference between sweet and sour tastes. Their smell is highly developed and they will know the difference between a career and their parents.</p>

Emotional	Eating and sleeping may show a definite pattern that you as parents, you may recognise, fits in with your baby's feeding regime. There will be periods of alert wakefulness and then light sleep followed by deep sleep. Sucking and rooting become stronger; your baby will now master the pattern of sucking, swallowing and breathing during a feed that is very different from the comfort sucking pattern, they have previously shown. At this stage, feeding for themselves will wear them out.
Social	Interaction between parent and baby is becoming more and more apparent. They may be able to shut out repetitive sounds and activity whilst asleep. This process is showing early learning ability and reflects the brain maturing. Your baby will increasingly be able to pay attention to the environment. You will notice you baby will react to different stimuli. They will interact with you, recognising a parent's voice and mimic your expressions. Your baby may well turn its head to follow a moving object or to locate a sound. Smiles may be seen in response to a pleasing sound at this stage.

Below are useful for further information and support:

- www.bliss.org.uk Bliss aim to help babies and their parents at all stages of their journey.
- www.networks.nhs.uk/nhs-networks/eoe-neonatal-odn/parents-and-carers East of England Neonatal Operational Delivery Networks is for parents and carers provide further information on baby development.
- www.bestbeginings.org.uk Best Beginnings have links to various pages that are useful for all new parents/carers. There are also links to helpful pages for parents with premature and sick babies.
- www.nct.org.uk National Childbirth Trust (NCT) provide information and courses for new parents.

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