

Early term infants less likely to breastfeed

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A new, prospective study provides evidence that "early term" infants (those born at 37-38 weeks) are less likely than full-term infants to be breastfeed within the first hour and at one month after birth. The early-term infants also had lower exclusive breastfeeding and lower breastfeeding intensity during the first 72 hours in the hospital and at one month, according to the study published in *Breastfeeding Medicine*.

The article is entitled "Breastfeeding Intensity and Exclusivity of Early Term Infants at Birth and One Month" and was written by Anita Noble, DNSc, Hadassah-Hebrew University (Jerusalem, Israel), Lawrence Noble, MD, Elmhurst/Hospital/Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai (Elmhurst, NY), and coauthors from Hadassah-Hebrew University and Kings County Hospital/SUNY-Downstate Medical Center (Brooklyn, NY).

The researchers recommend that extra attention and lactation assistance be given to the early term infant/maternal pair to help overcome the difficulties in breastfeeding that may be caused by the neurologic immaturity of the [infants](#). Beginning breastfeeding within the critical hour(s) after birth can have a substantial impact on continuation rates at one month and on infant health, morbidity, and mortality.

Arthur I. Eidelman, MD, Editor-in-Chief of *Breastfeeding Medicine* states: "This study emphasizes that though technically labeled as term infants, this is a high risk population that requires added and targeted [breastfeeding](#) support programs."

More information: Anita Noble et al, Breastfeeding Intensity and Exclusivity of Early Term Infants at Birth and 1 Month, *Breastfeeding Medicine* (2019). [DOI: 10.1089/bfm.2018.0260](https://doi.org/10.1089/bfm.2018.0260)

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