



Human Milk Fortifier (HMF)

Parent/Caregiver/Whānau Information – Neonatal Services

Breastmilk is the ideal milk for your baby. However babies born prematurely, or those that have very low birth weights, have additional nutritional requirements. These include calories, protein, salts, vitamins, minerals and trace elements.

What is HMF?

Human milk fortifier (or HMF) is a multi-nutrient powder derived from a highly modified whey protein derived from a cow's milk base which is used to add the extra nutrients your baby's needs to your breastmilk.

These added nutrients include:

- Protein
- Energy/glucose
- Salts (sodium and potassium)
- Calcium and phosphorus
- Vitamins A, D, E, K, B1-12, C, folic acid
- Iron
- Zinc
- Iodine

Does my baby need HMF?

If your baby was born less than 32 weeks gestation and/or weighed under 1800 g at birth, he/she will require additional nutrients to assist body growth, healthy brain development and bone growth. We will measure body growth by weighing your baby every 4 days, and measuring length and head circumference once per week.

When does HMF start?

Your baby will start on HMF when your baby is tolerating most of their nasogastric feeds and you will be advised when this is going to happen. HMF will gradually increase to ensure it is tolerated. Side effects are not common but we will monitor your baby for any changes. Things to look for would include increased spilling, a bloated tummy or runny bowel motions.

How is HMF added to my breastmilk?

We add 1 sachet per 25 mL of your breastmilk. Each sachet weighs about 1 gram. Your breastmilk may look a pale pink colour, this is due to the iron in the HMF.

How do we know if HMF is making a difference?

The Neonatal Dietitian and medical team will monitor your baby's growth and blood results to check the nutrition is adequate for your baby. We aim for about 20-30 grams of weight gain per day. Sometimes if growth is not adequate we may need to add other supplements, for example protein or calories, and this will be discussed with you.

How long does HMF continue?

HMF is continued until your baby is about 2.5 kg, has ideal body growth, good levels of protein, sodium and phosphorus in the blood and is starting to breast or bottle feed. Sometimes we need to continue HMF a bit longer.

If you have any questions about your baby's nutrition the Dietitian is available Monday to Friday to answer any questions. Your nurse can assist you to make contact if required.