STAGE 2

Strengthening

Your baby's breathing support is easing, often from a ventilator to CPAP or a nasal cannula, and milk feeds are being introduced through a feeding tube alongside or instead of IV nutrition. Treatment for jaundice and routine monitoring are common now. The next goal is steadier breathing and tolerating growing feeds.

Hurdles to stage 3

What usually comes next. Tick them off as they happen.

- [ ] Milk feeds established: most of your baby's nutrition now comes as milk through a feeding tube rather than through a drip.
- [ ] Respiratory stability: your baby's breathing is becoming steadier, with less support needed.

Milestones at stage 2

- [ ] My baby is receiving phototherapy for jaundice, if needed.
- [ ] Imaging tests (for example ultrasounds or X-rays) are helping monitor my baby's progress.
- [ ] My baby has had their first contact with me.
- [ ] My baby and I have had our first kangaroo cuddle (skin-to-skin contact).
- [ ] My baby is receiving my expressed breast milk or donor milk, if that is available to us.
- [ ] My baby is moving from IV nutrition to tube feeds.
- [ ] My baby's breathing is becoming steadier, and caffeine may be reducing.
- [ ] Nutritional adjustments, such as fortifying milk, are being made to support my baby's growth.

A note for you

Progress is not always a straight line. Many babies move back a stage for a while — that is a common part of NICU time, not a step backwards for you.

Your reflections

Something I learned this week:

General information and personal tracking only, not medical advice. This guide brings together publicly available guidance from health organisations and published research. It has not been reviewed by a clinician and is not tailored to your baby. Your care team knows your baby best. In an emergency, call emergency services immediately.

Support I would like right now:

One small thing I did for myself:

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