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Feeding and Growth in Small for Gestational Age Infants

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Let's talk about some tiny babies, specifically small for gestational age (SGA) babies. These babies experience growth restriction during pregnancy and are smaller than babies born without growth restriction. SGA babies have increased complications, frequent hospital readmissions and longer lengths of stay in hospital. After birth, SGA babies experience a period of accelerated growth called catch-up growth. Approximately 80% of these babies achieve catch-up growth by age 2, yet we know little about the quality of the growth. Underfeeding or overfeeding could significantly impact growth, with too little leading to poor neurodevelopmental outcomes and too much leading to adverse health outcomes later in life. My research will monitor growth and assess body composition to quantify catch-up growth as suboptimal, optimal or excessive and examine how feeding is associated with each growth pattern. This research could determine clinical care guidelines for SGA babies with the goal of improved quality of life.