



MATERNITY /NICU JAUNDICE IN NEW-BORN BABIES

What is jaundice?

Many new-born babies develop jaundice. Most of the time, this is harmless and usually clears up on its own within 10-14 days. If your baby has jaundice, his/her skin and eyes will look slightly yellow.

- Jaundice occurring in the first 24 hours of life is not common and must be followed up urgently: your baby will need a blood test
- If you think your baby is jaundiced and is less than 24 hours old, if you are at home, you must take your baby to the Emergency Department of the hospital.
- If your baby appears jaundiced after 24 hours and is not feeding well, or is lethargic, then you must also contact a doctor urgently. i.e. the same day, for advice.

What treatment will my baby be given?

- Your baby may be given light treatment known as 'phototherapy'.
- Your baby will be placed under a lamp that shines a special type of blue light onto the skin. This light

helps to break down the bilirubin which will then be passed out of your baby's body in the urine and stools.

- Your baby will be undressed, except for a nappy, and placed under the light. Eye pads will be placed over your baby's eyes to protect them from the light.
- You will be able to take your baby out from under the lamp for short breaks for feeds, nappy changes and cuddles, unless the jaundice level is very high when the baby may need to stay under the lights continuously until the jaundice level comes down to a safe value.
- Blood samples will usually be taken every 6-12 hours in order to measure the amount of bilirubin in your baby's blood
- You can usually continue to breastfeed your baby during phototherapy.
- Babies with extremely high bilirubin levels may need to be treated in an intensive care unit.

If you have any further concerns, please speak to your paediatrician

References NICE website
<http://publications.nice.org.uk/neonatal-jaundice-cg98>



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