

Discharge Instructions for Newborn Jaundice



Your baby has jaundice. This is a short-term condition. But it can cause long-term problems if it's not treated.

Jaundice happens when your baby's liver is still immature. The liver can't help the body get rid of enough bilirubin. Bilirubin is a substance found in the red blood cells. It can build up in the blood after your baby is born. This is part of the normal breakdown of red blood cells. But if bilirubin levels become too high and aren't treated, they can harm your baby's developing brain and nervous system. This can cause a condition called kernicterus. That is why healthcare providers check babies who have signs of jaundice to make sure the bilirubin level doesn't become unsafe.

An immature liver is normal at this stage of your baby's growth. Your baby's liver should soon start to help remove bilirubin from the body. Almost half of all babies show some signs of jaundice, such as yellow skin or eyes. There are other causes for abnormal jaundice in newborns. So your baby's healthcare provider will closely watch your baby's health until the jaundice goes away.

Home care

- Watch your baby for signs of jaundice coming back or getting worse:
 - Your baby's skin or the whites of the eyes turns yellow.
 - If jaundice gets worse, the yellow color will move from the eyes to your baby's face. Then it will move down your baby's body toward the feet.
- Breastfeed your baby often. Feed your baby at least 8 to 12 times every 24 hours. (Most babies with jaundice get better after eating for several days because the bilirubin is removed from the body in the stools.)
- Talk with your baby's healthcare provider about feedings if you are bottle-feeding your baby.
- Arrange to have "bili lights" at home if your baby's healthcare provider advises it. They can help your baby's body break down the bilirubin. Sometimes babies need to go to the hospital for more intensive therapy if the bilirubin stays too high.

When to call your baby's healthcare provider

Call your baby's healthcare provider if your baby:

- Doesn't want to feed at least 8 to 12 times every 24 hours
- Has pale skin
- Has pale or grayish stool or bowel movements
- Has jaundice that gets worse (yellow color moving toward the feet)
- Has jaundice that doesn't improve by 2 weeks of age
- Has a fever
- Is fussy or crying a lot
- Is vomiting
- Has fewer wet or soiled diapers per day than expected. As a general rule, newborns who are getting enough milk will poop 3 to 4 times a day by their fourth day of life. Their stool should be yellow rather

than black, brown, or green by day 5. They will likely also have at least 1 wet diaper for each day of age in the first week (1 the first day, 2 the second day, and so on).

© 2000-2027 The StayWell Company, LLC. All rights reserved. This information is not intended as a substitute for professional medical care. Always follow your healthcare professional's instructions
This information is not intended as a substitute for professional medical care. Always follow your Healthcare professional's instructions. Copyright Krames LLC.