

Transient Tachypnea of the Newborn



What is transient tachypnea of the newborn?

Transient tachypnea of the newborn is a mild breathing problem. It affects babies during the first hours of life. Transient means it is short-lived. Tachypnea means fast breathing rate. The problem often goes away on its own within about 3 days.

How to say it

tuh-KIHP-nee-uh

What causes transient tachypnea of the newborn?

Before babies are born, they have fluid in their lungs. Babies reabsorb some of that fluid because of hormone changes that happen before birth. More fluid gets reabsorbed as they pass through the birth canal during delivery. The rest of the fluid is absorbed into the lungs after they are born and start breathing on their own. If the fluid isn't absorbed fast enough or if they have too much fluid in the lungs, they can't take in oxygen very well. Babies with this problem have to breathe faster and harder to get enough oxygen into the lungs.

Who is at risk for transient tachypnea of the newborn?

Only a small number of all newborn babies get this breathing problem. Although premature babies can have it, most babies with this problem are full-term. Babies delivered by C-section (without labor) are more likely to have this condition. This is because without the hormone changes of labor the fluid in the lungs is still there. The baby has to work to reabsorb it after birth. Babies of moms with diabetes or asthma may also be more likely to have this condition.

What are the symptoms of transient tachypnea of the newborn?

Symptoms may be a bit different for each child. They can include:

- Fast breathing rate of more than 60 breaths per minute
- Grunting sounds with breathing
- Flaring of the nostrils
- Pulling in around the ribs with breathing

The symptoms of this breathing problem can seem like other health conditions. Make sure your child sees their healthcare provider for a diagnosis.

How is transient tachypnea of the newborn diagnosed?

Your baby may need a chest X-ray to help diagnose the problem. On X-ray, the lungs look streaky and overinflated. The symptoms of this breathing problem may seem like other more serious respiratory problems. These include lung infection (pneumonia) or premature lungs (respiratory distress syndrome). Often transient tachypnea of the newborn is diagnosed when symptoms go away in the first few hours or days of life.

How is transient tachypnea of the newborn treated?

Often the problem goes away on its own within about 3 days. Treatment will depend on your child's symptoms, age, and general health. It will also depend on how severe the condition is.

Treatment may include:

- **Supplemental oxygen.** Oxygen is given to your baby by placing a mask on the face or prongs (cannula) in the nose. Or by putting your baby under an oxygen hood.
- **Blood tests.** These tests measure the amount of oxygen and carbon dioxide in your baby's blood. Tests may also be done to look for infection.
- **Continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP).** This treatment uses a mechanical breathing machine. The machine pushes a continuous flow of air to your baby's airways to help keep tiny air passages in the lungs open.
- **IV (intravenous) fluid.** Your baby may need this for hydration and nutrition if the condition doesn't go away in the first few hours. This is because babies who are having trouble breathing aren't able to eat.
- **Tube feeding.** Babies may need this if their breathing rate is too high for more than a few hours. This will help give your baby more nutrition without the risk of breathing in food from the mouth into the lungs.

Once the problem goes away, your baby should get better quickly. They aren't likely to have any long-term problems.

Key points about transient tachypnea of the newborn

- Transient tachypnea of the newborn is a mild breathing problem. It affects babies soon after birth and lasts up to 3 days.
- The problem often goes away on its own.
- Treatment may include supplemental oxygen, blood tests, and continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP). Babies will often need help with nutrition until they are able to feed by mouth.
- Once the problem goes away, your baby should get better quickly. There aren't likely to be any long-term problems.

Next steps

Tips to help you get the most from a visit to your child's healthcare provider:

- Know the reason for the visit and what you want to happen.
- Before your visit, write down questions you want answered.
- At the visit, write down the name of a new diagnosis and any new medicines, treatments, or tests. Also write down any new instructions your provider gives you for your child.
- Know why a new medicine or treatment is prescribed and how it will help your child. Also know what the side effects are.
- Ask if your child's condition can be treated in other ways.
- Know why a test or procedure is recommended and what the results could mean.
- Know what to expect if your child does not take the medicine or have the test or procedure.
- If your child has a follow-up appointment, write down the date, time, and purpose for that visit.
- Know how you can contact your child's provider after office hours. This is important if your child becomes ill and you have questions or need advice.

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