

5. Keeping the Newborn Warm

Objectives of the session

By the end of this session, the ASHA will learn about:

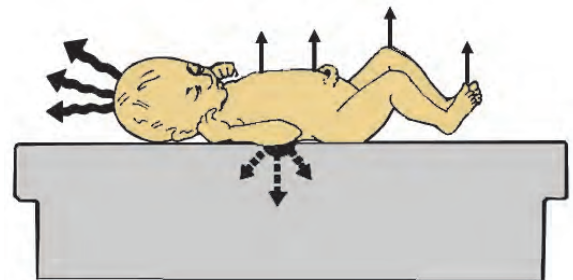
- Identify the newborn whose body temperature is less than normal and whose body temperature is more than normal.
- Teach mothers how to keep the newborns warm.
- Teach mothers how to re-warm cold babies.
- Teach mothers how to control newborn temperature in hot weather.
- Learn to take the temperature.



Keeping newborn warm and the problem of hypothermia

Why is it important to keep baby warm after delivery?

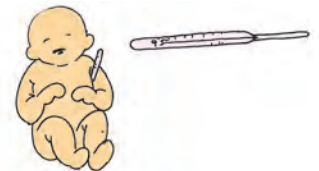
Babies have difficulty maintaining their temperature at birth and in the first day of life. They come out wet, and lose heat quickly. If they get cold, they use up energy, and can become sick. LBW and pre-term babies are at greater risk of getting cold.



When and why do most newborns get cold?

Most newborns lose heat in first minute after delivery.

They are born wet. If they are left wet and naked, they lose a lot of heat to the air. A newborn baby's skin is very thin and its head is big in size compared to its body. It loses heat very quickly from its head. Babies do not have the capacity to keep themselves warm. If the newborn baby is not properly dried, wrapped, and its head is not kept covered, it can lose 2 to 4 degree Celsius within 10-20 minutes.



Example: If the baby's temperature was 97.7 degree Fahrenheit (36.5 degree Celsius) (normal temperature) at the time of birth and if there was a loss of 2.7 degree Fahrenheit because the baby was not properly dried and covered, the body temperature will become 95 degree Fahrenheit (35.0 degree Celsius), which is below normal.



What is the term for a situation when a baby's temperature falls below normal?

When a baby has a temperature below normal, it suffers from **hypothermia**.

What happens to a baby with hypothermia?

A baby who is cold, and has a low temperature (hypothermia) suffers from:

- Decreased ability to suckle at the breast, leading to poor feeding and weakness.