

Illness in newborn babies

After babies are born they have to breathe, suck, feed, wee, poo and stay warm. This leaflet will tell you how to keep your baby safe and healthy. Do not delay seeking help if you have any concerns.

What is Jaundice?

Jaundice is caused by rising levels of a natural chemical in the blood after birth. It causes a yellowing of the skin, whites of the eyes and the gums (see images on right).

Most babies will not be affected, but a small number require treatment. Most only need monitoring, some require light-treatment, a few require specialist support.

If your baby has signs of jaundice contact your maternity department during the day or night. They will perform a painless and quick bilirubin test. Some babies may need a blood test. Sunshine is not a treatment so please do not place your baby in direct sunlight. Regular feeding can help.

Early signs of illness in the newborn baby

Picture 1 shows yellowing of the whites of the eyes



Picture 2 shows yellowing of the skin

Breathing, colour and movement



If your baby has any of the following call 999 immediately:

- Any change in colour (very pale, blue or dusky)
- Difficulty breathing (noisy grunts, rapid breaths, ineffective breathing, frequent pauses or working hard to breathe)
- Regular jerking of the arms and legs like a fit

If you are concerned about your baby's health contact your midwife, health visitor or GP.

In an emergency dial 999, during the day or night.

Make sure you have a contact number for your midwife or the hospital before you head home.

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Feeding

The following shows how many times your baby should feed and have a wet or dirty nappy in a 24hr period for the first five days of life.

	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	DAY 5
FEEDS	3-5	8-12	8-12	8-12	8-12
DIRTY NAPPIES	Black, sticky, tar-like at least once	Can be like Day 1 or changing to Day 3	At least 3-4 yellow stools which may be seedy	At least 3-4 yellow stools which may be seedy	At least 3-4 yellow stools which may be seedy
WET NAPPIES	2-3	2-3	3 or more	3 or more	6 or more

Midwife contact details



Please contact your Community Midwife on the number you were given at discharge

For any non-emergency concerns, you can also call NHS 111 if you are unable to contact your midwife.

For more information, please visit www.nhs.uk and search 'illness in a baby'