



Jaundice

What is newborn jaundice?

Jaundice is a common condition in newborn babies that causes yellowing of the skin and the whites of the eyes. In black and brown-skinned babies, the yellowing may be more difficult to see and visible only on the palms of the hands and the soles of the feet. It is very common and usually nothing to worry about and disappears after 10-14 days.

You should feed as often as possible to encourage frequent bowel movements. If you are breastfeeding, you should continue to breastfeed your baby regularly. In some breastfed babies, the skin can continue to look a little bit yellow for up to 12 weeks. This is related to the breast milk, and is normal as long as your baby is otherwise healthy and thriving.

In more severe cases, you may be required to bring your baby back to the hospital to spend some time under a special ultraviolet light. Newborn jaundice is usually gone by about two weeks of age. More severe jaundice may need treatment. **If jaundice continues for over 14 days, the jaundice does not start until seven days after birth or baby's faeces are chalky white you must contact your health visitor or GP.**

1.

My baby appears to have mild jaundice, what should I do?

2.

Feed your baby as often as possible to ensure they are not dehydrated.

3.

If worried ask your midwife, health visitor or GP.

Testing for jaundice

Step 1

Press your fingers lightly on the skin, as if you are checking a peach to see if it is ripe, and look at the colour of the spot where your finger was. Try pressing the tip of their nose.

Step 2

If it looks yellow (rather than white), it is likely to be jaundice. This test must only be used under good daylight or fluorescent lighting (next to a window is ideal). The baby should be undressed so different parts of the body can be compared. On darker skin check palms of hands and soles of the feet.

Step 3

Talk to your health visitor or GP.