



If you'd like to know more, please call 1-800-CDC-INFO

A close-up, black and white photograph of a newborn baby's face. The baby has large, bright blue eyes and is looking directly at the camera. The skin is smooth and pale. The background is out of focus, showing some indistinct shapes.

did you know that jaundice

can sometimes lead

to brain damage

in newborns

Your Guide to Newborn Jaundice Safety

What is Newborn Jaundice?

Jaundice is caused by high levels of bilirubin, a natural substance that can build up in a baby's blood and skin.

- All babies are at risk for developing newborn jaundice
- 60% of newborn infants develop jaundice
- 1 in 10 newborns will need treatment. Most treatment is easy, low-cost, and painless
- If jaundice is not checked for and treated properly, high levels of bilirubin can cause brain damage resulting in a life-long condition called kernicterus
- Although most babies with jaundice will be fine, you should learn about jaundice and work with your doctor or nurse to keep your baby safe and healthy
- **Most importantly, ask your doctor or nurse about a jaundice bilirubin test**

How is my baby's jaundice treated?

If your baby has high bilirubin levels, your doctor or nurse might suggest increasing feeding, or phototherapy treatment. With phototherapy your baby will need to lie under special blue lights in the hospital or at home. **Putting your baby in the sun is not a safe way to treat jaundice!**

How to Use This Guide

This guide will tell you what you need to know – and do – to make sure your baby has a safer experience with newborn jaundice. It is divided into three main sections:

- Before your baby is born
- Before you take your baby home from the hospital
- Your first few days at home

Each section has easy-to-follow information and checklists for you to complete and share with your doctor.



Before Your Baby is Born



Early Risk Factors Checklist

Is my baby likely to have jaundice?

Check if it is true:

- Baby has Mediterranean, Middle-Eastern or East-Asian ethnicity
- Baby has a brother or sister who had jaundice
- Baby's mother's blood type is O and/or Rh negative

Take Action

What should I do?

Talk with your doctor or nurse about any boxes you checked, but remember that any baby can develop jaundice.

Ask your baby's doctor or nurse about a jaundice bilirubin test

Whether you checked off any risk factors or not, talk to your doctor or nurse about a jaundice bilirubin test. It is the best way to know whether your baby will need treatment.

Before You Take Your Baby Home from the Hospital

Risk Factors Checklist

Is my baby likely to need treatment for jaundice? *Check if it is true:*

- Baby born before due date
- Baby has jaundice within 24 hours after birth
- Baby is having a hard time breastfeeding
- Baby has bruises
Where? _____
- Baby has a different blood type than mother

Take Action

What should I do?

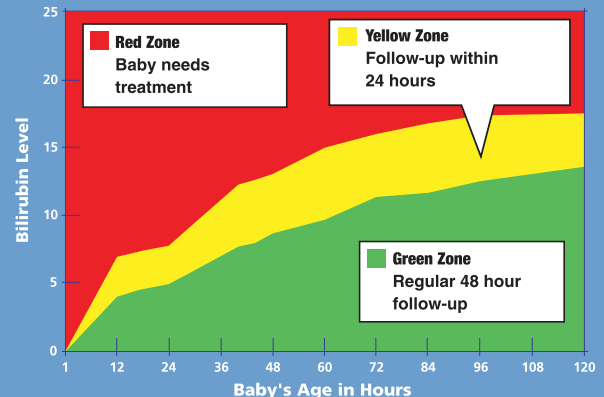
- 1) Talk with your baby's doctor or nurse about any of the things you checked.
- 2) If you are having trouble breastfeeding, work with your doctor and nurse to get the help you need.
- 3) Ask your baby's doctor or nurse about a jaundice bilirubin test. It's important to ask about this test before you take your baby home from the hospital.

- 4) Make a follow-up appointment. All babies should have a follow-up appointment within 48 hours after they go home from the hospital.

Appointment Date and Time: _____

- 5) Ask your doctor to explain results from the jaundice bilirubin test and how to track it on the nomogram.

Bilirubin Nomogram



Enjoy This Special Time

Congratulations!
Reading this guide is an important first step to helping your baby have a safer experience with newborn jaundice. Be sure to talk to your doctor or nurse if you have any more questions. Remember to take this guide with you to the hospital – and to use it.

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please call 1-800-CDC-INFO.

More Resources

Search the following sites for key words *jaundice* and *kernicterus*

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov

Parents of Infants and Children with Kernicterus
www.pickonline.org

BiliTool Web
www.bilitool.org

American Academy of Pediatrics
www.aap.org

National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition
www.hmhb.org

Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
www.awhonn.org

Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations
www.jointcommission.org