

Children's services

Prolonged jaundice in babies

Information for parents

Introduction

This leaflet explains more about jaundice in babies and why it occurs. Please ask our team any questions you have about the information below.

What is jaundice?

Jaundice is the name given to the yellow appearance of the skin and the whites of the eyes. It is commonly seen in newborn babies and usually develops on the second or third day. In most babies it gradually fades by the tenth day.

Why do some babies remain jaundiced?

The liver may take longer to work in babies who are born prematurely. Breastfed babies may have jaundice for longer, although this fades with time.

Prolonged jaundice may also be caused by:

- an infection or other illness
- a condition one parent has which makes the baby more likely to develop jaundice
- a poor functioning thyroid gland

Jaundice is rarely caused by a liver problem.

What happens when I bring my baby to the ward?

Your baby will be weighed and examined and you will be asked some questions. Blood samples will be collected from your baby and a fresh urine sample will need to be caught. This may take several hours and you will need to remain on the ward. You will also have been asked to bring a recent stool specimen for examination. We will enter your visit into your parent held record (red book).

What happens after my visit?

We will phone you within 48 hours with the initial results and send a letter with the final results to you and your GP within six weeks. If the results are abnormal we will arrange another visit to the hospital. Occasionally, this may involve referral to a specialist doctor for further investigations.

In most cases the results come back normal and nothing more needs to be done.

Further information

www.yellowalert.org/Baby-Jaundice

How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. If you have any **suggestions** or **comments** about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (**PALS**) on **020 3313 0088** (Charing Cross, Hammersmith and Queen Charlotte's & Chelsea hospitals), or **020 3312 7777** (St Mary's and Western Eye hospitals). You can also email PALS at pals@imperial.nhs.uk. The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

Alternatively, you may wish to express your concerns in **writing** to:

Chief Executive - Complaints
Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust
Trust Headquarters
The Bays, South Wharf Road
London W2 1NY

Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print, as a sound recording, in Braille, or in alternative languages. Please contact the communications team on **020 3312 5592**.