

# JAUNDICE IN NEWBORN

Aster HOSPITAL

We'll Treat You Well

Digital Version



Jaundice is common in neonates, approximately 80 % babies do develop some amount of jaundice. Majority do not require any treatment and it disappears within two weeks on its own. However approximately 5-8% babies need treatment when it crosses the limit for the corresponding gestational age and number of hours or days after birth. Higher levels of jaundice can potentially cause brain injury. Hence it is important to closely monitor jaundiced babies.

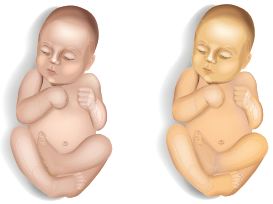
## WHAT IS JAUNDICE?

Jaundice is the yellow discoloration of the skin and sclera of newborns. It happens when a substance called bilirubin builds up in the baby's blood more than normal level. It is seen inbabies of any race and color.

## WHAT IF YOUR BABY HAS JAUNDICE?

When jaundice or hyper bilirubinemia occurs, you will notice white part of your baby's eyes known assclera aswell as his/her skin has a yellow cast, this is because a yellow pigment called bilirubin which accumulates in the tissue, especially the skin. Most of the cases it is harmless, and no treatment is required.

## WHY JAUNDICE OCCUR IN NEWBORN?



Healthy baby

Baby with severe jaundice

Babies have more red blood cells than adults and its lifespan is for less as compared to adult. It is a natural process to the baby's bloods to breakdown these excess blood cells, forming a large amount of bilirubin. It is this bilirubin, which causes the skin to take on a yellowish color and this bilirubin is unconjugated bilirubin which has to be taken to the liver for conjugation. Newborn liver is immature and cannot process bilirubin as quickly as he will be to do, when he gets older. This slow processing of liver has nothing to do with liver disease, it merely means that the baby's liver is not fully developed, and there is some delay in eliminating the bilirubin, the liver will start functioning normally within a few days' time.

## IS JAUNDICE HARMFUL TO MY BABY?

Most of babies have mild jaundice that is harmless. But in certain situation for example, if mother's blood group differ from baby's ABO or Rh incompatibility or deficiency of enzyme like G6PD, the level jaundice which appears within 24 to 48 hours should be monitored and intervention is required according to age and bilirubin level. For this we use international accepted chart called "BHUTANI CHART".

## HOW SHOULD NEWBORN BE CHECKED FOR JAUNDICE?

The best way to see jaundice is in good day light. Jaundice appears on the face and moves to chest, abdomen and arms and legs, so if your baby looks jaundice in the first few days after birth, baby's bilirubin level must be checked using a skin test (called bilicheck) or blood test (called serum bilirubin). Also, pediatrician /neonatologist will advise as per the jaundice level at the time of discharge when to return for next jaundice follow-up as per risk assessment.

## WHEN SHOULD MY NEWBORN GET CHECKED AFTER LEAVING THE HOSPITAL?

It is important for your baby to be seen by a doctor, when your baby is between 3-5 days old, because bilirubin is usually high during the period. The timing of this visit may vary depending on the baby's age maturity of the baby,severity of jaundice, policy of the hospital and other factors. Hospital policy is to recheck bilirubin after 48 hours of discharge from the hospital.

## WHEN SHOULD I CALL MY BABY'S DOCTOR?

- Your baby's skin turns more yellow
- Your baby's abdomen, arms, or legs are yellow
- You are having difficulty in breastfeeding
- Your Baby is jaundiced and is hard to wake up or fussy
- The white part of your baby's eyes are yellow

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PLEASE SCAN FOR
THE LOCATION

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