



What is Jaundice?

Jaundice is a common, temporary, and usually harmless condition in newborn infants caused when the chemical "bilirubin" builds up in the baby's blood. It is normal for everyone to have low levels of bilirubin in their blood because it is produced by the normal breakdown of red blood cells. As bilirubin builds up, it deposits in the fatty tissue under the skin causing the baby's skin and whites of their eyes to appear yellow.

What causes Jaundice?

Jaundice can be caused by several different problems:

Physiological jaundice: This is the most common cause and occurs in more than 50% of babies. It is due to an immature liver causing the bilirubin to be processed slower than normal. Usually appears at 2-3 days of age and usually disappears at 1-2 weeks of age.

Breast-feeding jaundice: May occur when your baby does not drink enough breast milk. It occurs in 5-10% of newborns. The jaundice indicates a need for help with breast-feeding.

Breast-milk jaundice: Occurs in 1-2% of breast-fed babies. It is caused by a special substance that some mothers produce in their milk, causing the intestines to absorb more bilirubin back into the body. Usually starts at 4-7 days of age, lasts about 3-10 weeks and is not harmful.

Blood group incompatibility (Rh or ABO problems): If a baby and its mother have different blood types, sometimes the mother produces antibodies that destroy the newborn's red blood cells. This can cause a sudden buildup of bilirubin in the baby's blood. Usually begins at 24 hours of life and is considered serious.

What is Phototherapy (BiliBlanket)?

High levels of bilirubin occurring in the blood is called hyperbilirubinemia. Very high levels can be dangerous to your baby. Your baby will have blood tests done to determine the level of bilirubin and be treated if necessary to ensure the health of your child.

Phototherapy (light therapy) is the process of using light to eliminate bilirubin in the blood. Your baby's skin and blood absorb these light waves and changes the bilirubin into products that can be passed through their system. The type of light used in the home is the same form of light found in sunlight. It uses fiber optics and is safe to use. It is the highest level of therapeutic light available for treatment.

How do you use the BiliBlanket effectively?

- The blanket or pad is encased in a thin vest which then needs to be placed directly on the baby's skin.
- The type we use is a pad that should be placed on the back, with the writing on the outside of pad and the plain side toward the skin.
- Secure the vest in front with Velcro. It does not need to be tight. It is placed on the back because it has the highest amount of blood flow close to the skin.

- It should be used 24 hours a day except for bathing or bringing baby to the MD or for labs.
- You will be asked to bring your baby in for a blood test either daily or every other day to assess continued need for therapy.
- Your child can be diapered, held, fed, nursed and clothed during treatment.
- Clothing can be placed **over** the pad/vest. Do not put any clothing between the child and the pad.
- The light will not get hot and does not need to be rotated to different parts of the body.

Other Considerations:

- Should be feeding every 2-3 hours to ensure baby does not get dehydrated
- Your baby's stool will go from black and sticky to green and yellowish. It will also be looser during therapy. As it becomes deeper, golden brown that is a good sign that bilirubin is being excreted from your baby's system.
- Please monitor the amount of wet diapers and number of stools, if your child is not urinating frequently (at least four wet diapers a day), please consult your doctor.
- Record the frequency and amount of feedings.
- Consult your doctor about how frequently they would like you to take the baby's temperature. Normal is between 97-99 degrees.
- Be aware that the bilirubin level may increase a little at the first blood draw, try to wait 24 hours before doing test.

Safety measures:

- Avoid moving unit as much as possible
- Place cords where they cannot be tripped over
- Do not use extension cords
- Do not put near or in water. Take off child to bathe

Call your Physician:

- ✓ Problems with feeding
- ✓ Vomiting
- ✓ Extreme sleepiness
- ✓ Rashes or skin irritation
- ✓ Temperature changes

Contact CareLinc:

- ✓ If light is not functioning correctly