



# CARE INSTRUCTIONS

KAISER PERMANENTE

## Newborn Jaundice: After Your Child's Visit

### Your Kaiser Permanente Care Instructions

Many newborn babies have a yellow tint to their skin and the whites of their eyes. This is called jaundice. While you are pregnant, your liver gets rid of a substance called bilirubin for your baby. Once your baby is born, his or her liver must take over this job. However, many newborns cannot get rid of bilirubin as fast as they make it, and it can build up, causing jaundice.

In healthy babies, some jaundice almost always appears by 2 to 4 days of age. It usually gets better or goes away on its own within a week or two without causing problems. If you are nursing, it may be normal for your baby to have very mild jaundice throughout breast-feeding.

In rare cases, jaundice gets worse and can cause brain damage. That is why it is important to call your doctor if you notice signs that jaundice is getting worse. Your doctor can treat your baby to get rid of the extra bilirubin. You may be able to treat your baby at home with a special type of light called phototherapy.

**Follow-up care is a key part of your child's treatment and safety.** Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if your child is having problems. It's also a good idea to know your child's test results and keep a list of the medicines your child takes.

### How can you care for your child at home?

- Watch your newborn for signs that jaundice is getting worse.
  - Undress your baby and look at his or her skin closely two times a day. For dark-skinned babies, look at the white part of the eyes to check for jaundice.
  - If you think that your baby's skin is getting more yellow, call your doctor.

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- Breast-feed your baby frequently (about 8 to 12 times or more in a 24-hour period). Extra fluids will help your baby's liver get rid of the extra bilirubin. If you are feeding your baby from a bottle, stay on your schedule (usually about 6 to 10 feedings every 24 hours).
- If you are using phototherapy to treat your baby at home, be sure that your doctor shows you how to use all the equipment.

## When should you call for help?

**Call your doctor now** or seek immediate medical care if:

- Your baby's yellow tint gets brighter or deeper.
- Your baby is arching his or her back and has a shrill, high-pitched cry.
- Your baby seems very sleepy, is not eating or nursing well, or does not act normally.
- Your baby does not pass 1 or 2 stools or wet 2 diapers in 24 hours, or your baby shows signs of dehydration, such as strong-smelling urine with a dark yellow color.

Watch closely for changes in your child's health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- Your baby does not get better as expected.

## Where can you learn more?

Go to <http://www.kp.org>

Enter T092 in the search box to learn more about "**Newborn Jaundice: After Your Child's Visit**".

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