

## References

If you require a full list of references for this leaflet please email [patient.information@ulh.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@ulh.nhs.uk)

The Trust endeavours to ensure that the information given here is accurate and impartial.



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# Neonatal Jaundice

## Information for Parents

Children's Services

Lincoln County Hospital  
Pilgrim Hospital, Boston  
Grantham and District Hospital

[www.ulh.nhs.uk](http://www.ulh.nhs.uk)

## **Aim of the leaflet**

This leaflet aims to provide parents with information about neonatal jaundice.

## **Introduction**

Jaundice is a yellowy tinge to the skin and the whites of the eyes and often affects new-born babies during the first few days and weeks. It is caused by a build up of the chemical, bilirubin, in the blood.

Bilirubin is made when haemoglobin (Hb) and red blood cells break down.

New-born babies have a higher Hb than adults, therefore, more cells are broken down.

Due to immaturity of the liver and the large amounts of bilirubin, the liver is unable to break it all down for the body to excrete. Therefore the bilirubin stays in the blood and causes the pigment in the skin.

## **Investigations**

To determine the level of bilirubin in the baby's bloodstream, a bilirubin skin test scan (Bilicheck) is performed on your baby's skin. If this number is above 250 then a blood test will be performed.

If the level is above a certain amount (which is calculated on the age and gestation of your baby), your baby will need to be treated with phototherapy at Lincoln County Hospital.

The phototherapy converts the bilirubin in the baby's bloodstream to a compound that can be excreted from the body.

Very rarely, if the bilirubin level is very high, the baby will need a special type of blood transfusion.

If the level is below treatment line, your baby can go home.

## **Prolonged jaundice**

If your baby is still jaundiced at 2 weeks old (3 weeks if they were born before 37 weeks gestation), they will need to have extra blood samples taken to ensure the jaundice is not due to liver, blood clotting problems or an infection.

If all these remain normal, no extra treatment is needed.

The jaundice will gradually fade which can take a few weeks.

Following discharge from the ward if you are concerned at all please telephone:

Safari Day Unit, Lincoln 01522 573172  
Rainforest Ward, Lincoln 01522 573786  
Children's Ward, Boston 01205 445563