

# Jaundice

The yellow color in your baby's skin is called jaundice. Jaundice is common in all newborns, breastfed or formula fed. It happens when a chemical called bilirubin builds up in the baby's blood. Low levels are not a problem, but some babies have too much. High levels need treatment. Being told that your baby has jaundice can be upsetting, but you can help your baby resolve it.



Your baby gets rid of bilirubin by passing it through the poops. Bilirubin poops look greenish and slimy. The more dirty diapers your baby has, the more bilirubin gets removed. If you breastfeed often, your baby dirties more diapers which, in turn, gets rid of more bilirubin.

The following tips will help:

- ♥ Nurse your baby every 2-3 hours during the day and at least once during the night (about 8-10 times in 24 hours). Jaundice makes babies sleepy so wake him up to nurse if you need to.
- ♥ If you are already nursing your baby often but your baby is still not making dirty diapers, he may be having problems getting milk out of the breast. Jaundice makes babies sleepy and lazy. Get help from a lactation nurse, WIC or breastfeeding support group. Give them a call! Also check the web for advice on good positioning and latch until you can get more help.
- ♥ It is important that the baby eats enough and makes dirty diapers for jaundice to go away. As the baby gets rid of the bilirubin, the poops will turn lighter and yellowish in color.
- ♥ You may be advised to give formula after nursing but this can decrease your milk supply. If you have a pump, it is much better to give your baby pumped milk instead of formula. Express some of your milk after nursing and give it to the baby. Only give formula if you are unable to pump. If giving supplement, it is best to use a dropper, spoon or a little cup. Giving a bottle before 2-4 weeks of age can make it more difficult for your baby to learn to nurse at the breast. A lactation nurse, WIC or support group can teach you how to feed the baby without using a bottle.
- ♥ As the jaundice goes away your baby will become more alert and nurse better. Be patient with your baby and yourself during this time.

*Jaundice lasts for only a short time.  
Mother's Milk offers health benefits that last a lifetime!*



Breastfeeding Awareness and Support Program  
Healthy Baby Line  
1-800-986-BABY



Pennsylvania WIC Program  
1-800-WIC-WINS  
2011