

How to check your baby for jaundice - Remove all your baby's clothes and look at him in the natural light of a window. Gently press your finger on his skin, and look at the color of his skin when you remove your finger, before his natural color returns. If the color you see is yellow, he may be jaundiced.

Call your doctor if:

- your baby appears yellow during the first 2 days of life
- your baby is not feeding well or seems to be overly sleepy and sluggish
- your baby has had no urine for 8 hours
- your baby appears yellow over the arms and the legs
- you are concerned about the increasing amount of yellow color of your baby's skin
- your baby has jaundice and it has not gone away 14 days after birth



Jefferson County Public Health
Community Health Services
645 Parfet Street
Lakewood, CO 80215
303-232-6301
Oct-13



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THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT **Jaundice**

What is Jaundice? Jaundice is a common condition in newborn babies. With this condition, the skin and occasionally the whites of the eyes, will appear yellow or light orange. This is due to your baby having increased amounts of a yellow substance in his blood called **bilirubin** (billy-ru-ben). Bilirubin in the bloodstream will cause the skin to appear yellow.

Why are newborns often jaundiced? Babies are born with extra red blood cells, which are broken down soon after birth, releasing bilirubin. The liver of the newborn is immature and may not work quickly enough to get rid of the bilirubin. Infants born prematurely become jaundiced more often than full-term infants.

When the bilirubin begins to build up in the blood, the infant starts to appear yellow. The color change progresses from head to toe, so an infant with mild jaundice may appear yellow only on his face, while one with severe jaundice will be yellow over his entire body.

After being changed by the liver, most bilirubin is removed from the body through your baby's bowel movements. Frequent feedings will increase the number of your baby's bowel movements, this will help get rid of the bilirubin. If you are breastfeeding or bottle-feeding, try to feed your baby every 1-3 hours. It is important to wake your baby for feedings; jaundice may cause them to sleep longer than usual.



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