

Further sources of information

NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/conditions

Our website: www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk

Patient Experience Team (PET)

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

King's Mill Hospital: 01623 672222

Newark Hospital: 01636 685692

Email: sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net. This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you. External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them. If you require a full list of references for this leaflet, please email sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net or telephone 01623 622515, extension 6927.

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INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

Protecting your baby from low blood sugar

You have been given this leaflet because your baby is at increased risk of having low blood sugar after birth and it is recommended that they have some blood tests to check their blood glucose level.

Your baby's blood glucose is tested by a heel-prick blood test which will give a result in a few minutes – this test is performed twice after birth, with repeated tests if results require re-testing.

Things to do to help avoid low blood sugars

Antenatal colostrum collection. You can pick up a kit from the maternity ward reception (1st floor) or request one from your community midwife - this can be done from 36 weeks (unless you have risk factors for premature birth (if you have risk factors for premature birth, we advise not collecting colostrum until 37 weeks of pregnancy). You can bring your labelled colostrum to your birth room (in a bag with ice packs) for use after baby is born.

Skin-to-skin contact with your baby on your chest after birth helps keep your baby calm, warm, helps establish breast/chest feeding, and exposes baby to 'good' bacteria which is beneficial for their gut. You can also do this any time in the postnatal period to keep your baby warm or to encourage feeding.

Keep your baby warm and put a knitted hat on them for the first few days while they are in hospital.

Offer an early feed (within the first hour after birth) and then feed every three hours or earlier in response to feeding cues your baby may be displaying. Feed for as long or as much as your baby wants.

You can start feeding baby responsively (at least 8-12 times in 24 hours) once their blood glucose is stable and baby is waking for feeds.

Express your milk if your baby is unable to breast/chest feed and give any colostrum you express. A maternity member of staff will show you how to feed this to your baby using a syringe or a feeding cup.

What happens if your baby's blood sugar is low?

If the blood glucose test result is low, your baby should feed as soon as possible, and you can provide skin-to-skin contact.

If you are breast/chest feeding and your baby does not feed, a member of staff will give you hands-off support to feed, or express or pump some of your milk.

If your baby has not breastfed/chest fed, and you have been unable to express any of your milk, your baby may be prescribed a dose of dextrose (sugar) gel which can be an effective way to bring your baby's glucose level up; or you may be advised to offer artificial formula (via a feeding cup).

If baby is unable to effectively feed staff may offer to feed baby via a nasogastric tube (NGT) – you can continue to offer your breast/chest whilst baby has an NGT.

If babies are too sleepy or unwell to feed, or if the blood glucose is still low after feeding, they may need to go to the Neonatal Unit. This care would be discussed with you at the time.

In most cases, low blood glucose quickly improves within 24-48 hours, and your baby will have no further problems.

What to do if you are worried about your baby

It is important that you tell staff promptly if you are worried that there is something wrong with your baby. Some things to watch out for are:

- Your baby is not interested in feeding.
- Your baby is cold.
- Your baby is very sleepy and difficult to wake up.
- Your baby feels floppy when you hold them.
- Your baby is making strong repeated jerky movements.
- Your baby appears to be breathing fast or working hard to breathe.
- Any other worries or concerns about your baby.

Who to call if you are worried:

- In hospital, inform any member of the clinical staff.
- At home, call maternity triage on 01623 676170.
- Out of hours, call NHS 111.
- If you are really worried, take your baby to your nearest Emergency Department or dial 999.