

Paediatric outpatient parenteral antibiotic therapy (p-OPAT) service for neonates

This leaflet aims to provide you with information about the neonatal p-OPAT service, available when your baby is on the post-natal ward. If you have any further questions, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you and your baby.

What is neonatal p-OPAT?

Antibiotics are used to fight infections caused by bacteria. When the antibiotics are injected into a vein it is called intravenous (IV) or parenteral therapy. It has been decided that IV antibiotics are the best course of treatment for your baby's possible infection. IV antibiotics are usually given to babies in hospital but they can be given safely at home. When given at home, this is called OPAT (outpatient parenteral antibiotic therapy).

How is the antibiotic given?

The antibiotic is given into your baby's vein through a cannula (a narrow, flexible tube) which is inserted into a vein using a needle. The needle is removed and the plastic cannula is left in place and secured by a dressing. Before your baby leaves hospital, you will be given information about how to care for the cannula by the nurse, but it is very important to keep the cannula dry and secure.

When on the post-natal ward, your baby will receive an IV antibiotic twice a day (morning and evening). To enable you to go home, we will change this antibiotic to one that only needs to be given once a day (in the morning). This antibiotic takes one hour to be given through the cannula.

Who decides if my baby should receive neonatal p-OPAT?

Babies being considered for the neonatal p-OPAT service will be those who are ready to go home, but who need further IV antibiotic treatment. If the neonatal team looking after you think that your baby is suitable for the service then they will refer you to the p-OPAT team. The p-OPAT nurse and infectious diseases doctor will then meet with you to assess you and see if your baby is eligible. The neonatal p-OPAT process will be fully explained to you and you can decide if it is something that you would like to consider. If you decide to go onto the neonatal p-OPAT service then arrangements will be made to make sure you and your baby are able to go home safely.

Does my baby have to go onto the neonatal p-OPAT service?

Your baby will not be discharged onto the neonatal p-OPAT service if you do not want them to be. If you choose for them not to go onto the service, then they can remain in hospital to complete the course of IV antibiotics.

What are the benefits of the neonatal p-OPAT service?

You and your baby will be able to be at home with your family in a comfortable and familiar setting rather than staying in the hospital. Neonatal p-OPAT is not always the right choice for everyone, but feedback from parents shows that they prefer it to staying in hospital.

Who will give my baby their IV antibiotics?

Baby's community nurses will come to your home and administer your baby's antibiotics. The nurse will prepare the medication and stay while it is being given to your baby. Which community nurse comes to your home depends on where you live.

If you live in Lambeth and Southwark and are registered with a GP in the area, then nurses from the Evelina London Children's Hospital @home Service will administer your baby's antibiotics. If you live out of this area, we will liaise with your local children's community nursing (CCN) team.

What are the risks?

Allergic reactions are extremely rare in babies less than one month of age. Your baby will be given a similar antibiotic in the hospital to the antibiotic your baby will have at home. Your baby will be monitored in hospital and at home when receiving the antibiotic.

Occasionally the cannula can stop working. If this happens then you need to bring your baby back to the neonatal unit at St Thomas' Hospital **straight away** for a new cannula and dose of antibiotics for that day. The nurse will call the unit to inform them that you will be returning. After your baby has had the new cannula and dose of antibiotic, you can go home again.

How long will my baby's treatment last?

Your baby will require only a few more days of IV antibiotic treatment. The length of treatment will be explained by the doctor looking after your baby.

Do I need to bring my baby to a follow-up clinic appointment?

Your baby will not need a follow-up clinic appointment. If you stay in hospital to complete the course of IV antibiotics, your baby would also not need a follow-up appointment.

What should I do if my baby is unwell or I am concerned?

Please do not hesitate to contact the neonatal ward team or the team looking after your baby at home if you have any concerns. The contact numbers for the teams are listed at the end of this leaflet. Complications with neonatal p-OPAT are rare. Very occasionally babies can get problems directly related to the antibiotic they are taking. This can occur if you are at home or in hospital. Some common things to look out for include the following:

- rash
- diarrhoea
- looking more yellow (jaundiced)
- fever (temperature over 38°C)
- pain, redness and swelling around the cannula site

If you are concerned that your baby is unwell, has poor feeding or has any of the above symptoms at home, please contact us to let us know. We will then be able to advise you and treat your baby. **In the event of an emergency, please call 999 for an ambulance or go to your local emergency department.**

Contact us

The Neonatal Ward Team

t: 020 7188 8846 seven days a week, 24 hours a day if you have any concerns about your baby.

The Neonatal p-OPAT Team

You can contact a p-OPAT Clinical Nurse Specialist by calling the switchboard on **t:** 020 7188 7188 and ask for the bleep desk. Ask for bleep 3053 and wait for a response. This will connect you to the p-OPAT nurse directly who works Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

The Children's Hospital @home Team

Please contact the nurse on call via switchboard, **t:** 020 7188 7188 seven days a week, 8am to 9pm (for babies who live in Lambeth and Southwark).

The Children's Community Nursing (CCN) Team

(Please complete the contact details if applicable)

Name and contact details of CCN Team:

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.evelinalondon.nhs.uk/leaflets

Evelina London Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your baby's medicines, please speak to the staff caring for them or contact our helpline.

t: 020 7188 3003 10am to 5pm, Monday to Friday **e:** letstalkmedicines@gstt.nhs.uk

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk
t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints) **e:** complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and Accessible Support Services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch.

t: 020 7188 8815 **e:** languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

t: 111

NHS Choices

Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.

w: www.nhs.uk

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