

# Prolonged jaundice service

**This leaflet explains more about the prolonged jaundice service. Your baby was referred to us because they are still jaundiced at the age of 21 days (3 weeks). This leaflet contains information about your baby's assessment and care. If you have any questions, please speak to your midwife.**

## About prolonged jaundice

Jaundice is a common condition in newborn babies. It causes yellowing of the skin and the whites of the eyes. This yellowing can be harder to see on brown or black skin. It might be easier to see on the gums, on the palms of the hands or the soles of the feet.

Jaundice usually clears up by the time a baby is 14 days (2 weeks) old, or by 21 days (3 weeks) in premature babies.

If your baby still appears jaundiced after 3 weeks of age, and is otherwise well with healthy looking poo and urine (pee), they need to be assessed to see why they still have jaundice.

You should alert your midwife if you think the colour of your baby's poo is pale or if their pee is a dark colour. These can be signs that further investigation is needed.

You can find more information about jaundice in babies, and pictures of healthy and suspect looking stool on the Children's Liver Disease Foundation website, visit [web](https://childliverdisease.org/liver-information/baby-jaundice/)  
<https://childliverdisease.org/liver-information/baby-jaundice/>

## Why your baby needs an assessment

In some babies, jaundice can last longer if they are being breastfed. This type of jaundice is usually harmless, and breast feeding may safely continue and the jaundice will fade with time.

However, prolonged jaundice can sometimes be a sign of another condition, such as infection or liver disease. That's why it is very important we find out why your baby's jaundice is prolonged.

## Next steps

Your midwife has sent us all the necessary details about your baby, including information about how they are feeding and gaining weight, and the colour of their poo and pee. The midwife has also given you information about how to book a visit in the Blood Tests Centre so the necessary blood tests are done for your baby.

### Blood tests

Take your baby for the blood test as soon as possible after the referral, ideally within the next 1 to 3 days. The Blood Test Centre is on the ground floor, South Wing, St Thomas' Hospital, Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5.30pm, [phone](tel:02071884778) 020 7188 4778.

## Getting the blood test results

A neonatal doctor (doctor that specialises in looking after babies) will review the information received from your midwife and the blood tests results, and will decide if your baby needs to be seen in hospital.

If the doctors think your baby has breast milk jaundice, we don't need to see your baby in hospital. We will let you know by text message (if you agree), through your MyChart app, or we'll call you. We will also send you a letter with the summary of the assessment.

If the reason for your baby's jaundice is unclear, or the jaundice is very high, we will contact you to arrange a hospital appointment.

## Treatment

Breast milk jaundice doesn't require treatment, and you should continue to breastfeed your baby.

If we ask you to bring your baby to a hospital appointment to see a doctor, we may need to do further tests to look for causes other than breast milk jaundice. If we find a different reason for your baby's jaundice we may have to treat it. This will be explained to you during your appointment with the neonatal doctor.

## Contact us

If you have any questions about your baby's jaundice, please speak to your midwife.

The prolonged jaundice service is part of children services and is run by the neonatal department. We accept electronic referrals from our midwifery colleagues.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit [web](http://www.evelinalondon.nhs.uk/leaflets) [www.evelinalondon.nhs.uk/leaflets](http://www.evelinalondon.nhs.uk/leaflets)

## NHS 111

This service offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers. They are supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. The service is available by phone 24 hours a day, [phone](tel:111) 111 [web](http://www.111.nhs.uk) [www.111.nhs.uk](http://www.111.nhs.uk) (111 online is for people aged 5 or over, and you need to call 111 to get help for a child under 5)

## NHS website

This website gives information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare. It can help you to take care of your child's health and wellbeing, [web](http://www.nhs.uk) [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

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