

Red Flags – signs that your baby is unwell

Trust your instincts. If you think your baby is unwell you need to either bring your child to see your GP or nearest paediatric A&E. Holles Street does not have accident or emergency services for babies who have gone home. The first sign that your baby is unwell is a change in normal patterns or behaviour.

These include the following:

Irritable, difficult to console and does not like to be touched

Drowsy, difficulty rousing, more lethargic or quiet than normal

Feeding: reduced by more than one third over a few feeds

Persistent vomits or green (bile-stained) vomits

Dry Nappies as they are feeding poorly or urinating less than normal

Poor Colour: pale, marbled (mottled) skin or blue colour

Infections

If your baby is showing any of signs of infection, particularly if they have been in contact with someone else who is sick, it is more appropriate to bring them to your nearest Paediatric A+E. Please call us so we can advise you where is best to be seen. Common signs of infection include:

- Fever
- Breathing fast, coughing
- Vomiting and diarrhoea



The National Maternity Hospital
Vita Gloriosa Vita – Life Glorious Life

Common Newborn Concerns

Information for new parents on frequently encountered issues in newborns





Constipation

- Stool patterns are variable with some babies dirtying their nappies several times a day and others only dirtying their nappies once every few days.
- Constipated babies will pass hard stools which may appear like pellets. They are difficult for your baby to pass. Ensure that they are drinking enough milk. If the problem persists or you are concerned about your baby contact your PHN or GP.

Colic and Wind

- Babies tend to be windy when they have swallowed too much air. This is painful and may cause them to cry excessively. If bottle fed, ensure that you are using a teat with an adequate flow. When the bottle is turned upside down, milk should flow at a speed of one to two drops per second. This helps to prevent your baby swallowing too much air. Wind your baby every 30-60mls (1-2oz) during feeds. This problem is less common after three months of age

Umbilical Cord

- Your baby's cord will shrivel up and fall off. The time it takes to do this varies but is usually about seven – ten days, occasionally longer. Expect some discharge and a small amount of blood when the cord comes off and sometimes for a few weeks after.
- Infections are not common, but we encourage regular cleaning with clean water and cotton wool at each nappy change. The umbilicus may sometimes begin to smell as it shrivels up. Keep the umbilicus clean and dry. If there is any redness on the skin on your baby's stomach around the belly button this may be a sign of infection and you should seek medical advice.

Sticky Eyes

- Babies often have sticky eyes after they are born. This is usually due to immaturity of the naso-lacrimal duct which resolves with time. Simple treatment of sticky eyes is to wipe each eye separately with cotton wool soaked in cooled boiled water from inside of nose outwards. If the problem is ongoing contact your PHN or GP. Signs of a more serious problem include redness in the white part of the eye or any bloody discharge from the eyes.

'Noisy Breathing'

- Babies have noisy, rapid breathing which often sounds as if they have a blocked nose. As they cannot blow their noses to clear their throats the accumulation of normal mucous plus milk makes their breathing sound quite strange. This doesn't mean they have a cold or allergy.

Jaundice

- Up to 60% of babies develop jaundice (a yellowish or tanned colour of the skin). Babies with jaundice may be sleepy and it is important to wake them for feeds. Your baby may have been treated for jaundice with phototherapy "lights" before going home. Jaundice will usually resolve by about 10 days. If the jaundice is worsening, it is important to ensure the baby feeds well and is having wet nappies, and contact your PHN or GP, or arrange an appointment with us.

Contact Us

Mon- Fri 9:30-1: Call Baby Clinic 6373440. Outside of this time contact hospital switch and ask to speak to the Baby Couch nurse or doctor. Please always contact us before attending the hospital
Other useful numbers:
Children's University Hospital, Temple St 8784200
Our Lady's Hospital, Crumlin: 4096100
National Children's Hospital, Tallaght: 4142925