

Serious illness in newborn babies

Occasionally babies develop serious illnesses or infections. When this happens it is important to seek medical attention as soon as possible so appropriate treatment can be started.

The information on this page will help you to recognise if your baby is unwell and to know when and how to seek help. Sometimes it can be difficult to know if a baby is seriously ill so it is important to trust your instincts.

Your baby is at higher risk of developing a newborn infection if:

- you are known to carry Group B Streptococcus or you have had a previous baby with a Group B Streptococcus infection
- your baby was born before 37 weeks of pregnancy
- you had a fever or any suspected/known infection 24 hours before or after the birth
- you needed intravenous antibiotics (given via a tube into a vein)
- your waters were broken for more than 18 hours before your baby was born especially if he/she was born before 37 weeks of pregnancy

Potentially Serious Symptoms

If your baby has any of the following symptoms, you should seek medical help as soon as possible:

- Daytime Monday to Friday – it is best to call your GP Practice
- Evenings and Weekend – call NHS 111 or the out-of-hours telephone number for your GP Practice
- Attend an Urgent Care (walk-in) Centre or your nearest Accident & Emergency Department

- Has an unusual cry e.g. a continuous, high pitched or weak cry
- Looks pale or has blotchy, mottled or ashen skin
- Is more sleepy or feels floppy when you pick him/her up
- Is not feeding regularly (at least 6-8 times per day after 24 hours of age) or you are concerned that he/she is not feeding as much as normal
- Vomits a large amount of feed regularly and/or the vomit is green in colour
- Has fewer wet nappies than normal or passes blood in his/her poo
- Feels hot to touch with a temperature of 38°C or more **OR** feels cold to touch with a temperature of 36°C or less
- Has difficulty breathing, e.g. breathing rapidly, making noises while breathing or working hard to get their breath and is sucking their stomach in under their ribs

Potentially Life Threatening Symptoms

You should call 999 for an emergency ambulance if your baby:

- Stops breathing or goes blue
- Will not wake up
- Has glazed eyes and is not able to focus on anything
- Has a fit – even if they recover
- Has a purple rash that does not fade with pressure (glass test)
- You think someone may have injured your baby

Other sources of information

NHS Choices: The UK's biggest health website, certified as a reliable source of health information: www.nhs.uk

Patient: Evidence based information on a wide range of medical and health topics.
<http://patient.info/>

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS will act on your behalf when handling patient and family concerns, they can also help you get support from other local or national agencies. PALS, is a confidential service.

Princess Royal Hospital, Tel: 01952 282888

Royal Shrewsbury Hospital, Tel: 0800 783 0057 or 01743 261691

Website: www.sath.nhs.uk

Disclaimer

This leaflet is provided for your information only. It must not be used as a substitute for professional medical care by a qualified doctor or other health care professional. Always check with your doctor if you have any concerns about your condition or treatment. This leaflet aims to direct you to quality websites: these are correct and active at the time of production. The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust is not responsible or liable, directly or indirectly, for ANY form of damages whatsoever resulting from the use (or misuse) of information contained in this leaflet or found on web pages linked to by this leaflet.

Your information

Information about you and your healthcare is held by the NHS. You can find out more about how we hold your information and how it is used on our website in your Pregnancy Information Book.

Information produced by: Women and Children's Care Group

Version 1 in this format

Date of Publication: 13th January 2017
Due for Review on: January 2020

© SaTH NHS Trust



Proud To **Care**
Make It **Happen**
We Value **Respect**
Together We **Achieve**