

# Early Onset Neonatal Infection

**Children's Services**  
**Women & Children's Services**

**This leaflet has been designed to give you important information about your condition / procedure, and to answer some common queries you may have.**



# Information for patients and visitors

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## Introduction

Most babies are born fit and healthy; however some babies can develop an infection during or shortly after birth. In a small number of babies an infection can be serious or even life threatening. When a baby develops an infection in the first 72 hours of life, this is called 'early onset neonatal infection'. This leaflet gives information about how we monitor babies at risk of infection, treatment and when you need to seek medical advice for your baby post discharge.

## Early Onset Neonatal Infection

Healthcare professionals taking care of your baby will have assessed whether your baby is at risk of an early onset neonatal infection earlier to, and after birth.

Risk factors for infection:

- Group B Strep (GBS) has been found on a vaginal swab or from a urine sample taken from mum during the current pregnancy\*
- Mum has had a previous baby who had a GBS infection\*
- Baby being born before 37 completed weeks of pregnancy
- Waters breaking for more than 18 hours before your baby is born. Mum having a fever higher than 38°C or where she is suspected of having an infection in the amniotic fluid / waters
- If any of these are relevant to you, the healthcare professionals looking after you and your baby will make a decision whether your baby should be closely monitored or started on antibiotics. This will be discussed with you before any treatment is started

**\*GBS is the commonest cause of early onset infection. It is a common bacteria found in approximately 1 in 4 healthy women and usually causes no problems. However, GBS can put your baby at an increased risk of developing an early onset infection. GBS is NOT a sexually transmitted infection.**

## My Baby May Have an Infection – What does this mean?

The most important treatment for infection in newborn babies is antibiotics which are given through a drip. Your baby may need more than one drip during the course of the treatment. Treating your baby means the baby is more likely to recover without any complications.

Before giving antibiotics it will be necessary to do some tests which will help us determine whether or not your baby has an infection. The tests will direct us to which type of infection, and how long we may need to continue the antibiotics. The team looking after your baby will keep you informed of the results of the tests, and explain what the results mean.



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### When can my baby come home?

Once your baby is well enough and has finished the antibiotic course, you can discuss going home with the team of doctors, nurses and midwives looking after your baby. There can be many factors which influence the time your baby can be discharged home. Following discharge, if you have any concerns about your baby, even if they are not in the list, ask advice from your GP, NHS Direct, or your local Accident and Emergency department.

If you have any more questions regarding your baby's treatment, please ask a member of staff caring for your baby.

### Even after your baby has been discharged home you should look out for:

- Alterations in behaviour or responsiveness
- Floppiness
- Refusing to feed, vomiting or their tummy looks bloated
- Signs of breathing difficulties
- Excessive crying
- Changes in skin colour
- Abnormal temperature
- Rapid breathing or pauses in breathing

### Contact Details for Further Information

If you are unsure what to do and need urgent advice, please call either your GP or 111. If you need urgent assistance, please attend your local Accident and Emergency department.

Hospital Switchboard: 03033 306999.

### Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service offers confidential advice, support and information on any health related matters.

If you have a comment, concern, complaint or compliment about the care or service you have received from the Trust you can contact the PALS team as follows:

Telephone: 03033 306518

Email: [nlg-tr.PALS@nhs.net](mailto:nlg-tr.PALS@nhs.net)

There are also offices at both the Diana Princess of Wales Hospital (near the main entrance) and Scunthorpe General Hospital (on the C Floor, near the outpatient department), should you wish to visit.

**Please note: PALS should not be contacted for clinical advice relating to the content of this leaflet. The service should be contacted directly in the first instance.**



# Information for patients and visitors

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## Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust

Diana Princess of Wales Hospital  
Scartho Road  
Grimsby  
DN33 2BA

Scunthorpe General Hospital  
Cliff Gardens  
Scunthorpe  
DN15 7BH

Goole & District Hospital  
Woodland Avenue  
Goole  
DN14 6RX

03033 306999

[www.nlg.nhs.uk](http://www.nlg.nhs.uk)

Date of Issue: February, 2018

Review Period: February, 2021

Author: Consultant Paediatrician

IFP-1005

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