



**Southeastern  
Pediatric**  
ASSOCIATES, P.A.

# Jaundice

## Definition

- Jaundice (yellow skin), not uncommon in babies of any race or ethnicity during the first weeks of life
- The skin turns a yellow color from high bilirubin levels in the blood.

## Jaundice and Bilirubin

- Jaundice means the skin has turned yellow.
- Bilirubin is the pigment that turns the skin yellow.
- Bilirubin comes from the normal breakdown of red blood cells which your baby no longer needs.
- The liver normally gets rid of bilirubin, but at birth, the liver may be immature.
- Half of babies have some jaundice. Usually it is mild.
- Typically, the level of bilirubin that is harmful is around 20, but each baby is different, and may require precautionary measures at a lower level.
- High levels need to be treated with phototherapy (or bili-lights/lamps) That's why your doctor checks your baby's bilirubin levels at baby's weight check appointment. Jaundice should go away within the first 2 weeks of baby's life.

## What Can I Do?

- Jaundice is more common in breastfed babies than formula fed babies.
- If breastfeeding, make sure you are feeding your baby every 1 1/2 - 2 hours, and do not let baby sleep more than 4 hours between feedings even at night.
- If formula feeding, increase how often you feed your baby to every 2-3 hours, and do not let baby sleep more than 4 hours between feedings even at night.
- At 5 days or older, your baby should have 3 stools per day. If not, feed more often. Feeding more often will help to carry bilirubin out of the body

## Call Your Doctor If:

- Jaundice gets worse
- Whites of the eyes turn yellow
- Belly or legs turn yellow
- Feeds poorly or has a weak suck
- Baby starts to look or act abnormal
- Jaundice lasts more than 14 days
- You think your child needs to be seen