

Class Preparation (Newborn Hepatic):

A mother just delivered a healthy, full-term infant. The mother is concerned because her first child required phototherapy for jaundice. As the nurse, what education would you provide for the mother about jaundice? What instructions are important to explain if the infant requires phototherapy? Are there ways to prevent the infant from developing jaundice?

Education that I would provide to the mother about jaundice is first to explain what jaundice is, and it's a condition that is very common and normal for the newborn period. Jaundice is when the baby has a little bit of a yellow color to their skin and it's just a high level of bilirubin in the blood. Bilirubin mostly comes from the breakdown of red blood cells and it gets processed in the liver to make it easier for the body to get rid of it through urine and bowel movements. Since they are newborns their livers just need some time to get working to get rid of the bilirubin, they also have more red blood cells than children and adults so it is more for them to break down to begin with.

Some instructions that are important to explain if the infant requires phototherapy is that the light is not harmful in any way, the light will help their body to get rid of the extra bilirubin that the liver hasn't yet. To keep them under the light for however long the provider orders and to interact with them as normal, talk and touch.

Ways to prevent infants from developing jaundice is to make sure mom blood and antibodies are checked, assess for any risk factors from mom early on and once baby is born check bilirubin levels at 24-48hr of life. Also ensure mom gets support while feeding and ensure baby is getting enough to eat in the first 3-5 days of life.