

### **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?

I would provide education that jaundice is a common occurrence in newborns. Around 60% of full-term infants develop jaundice in the first week after birth. Jaundice is caused by a buildup of bilirubin in the blood, causing the skin and eyes to have a yellowish tint.

While concerning, mild jaundice is typically harmless and self-limiting within 1-2 weeks. Some things to understand are that jaundice normally appears within the first 2-4 days of life; often starts in the face and goes downward; frequent feedings q2-3h help the newborns pass bilirubin through their GI system; most cases do not require treatment.

If the infant requires phototherapy, I will explain that the infant will be placed under special blue lights or on a light-emitting blanket; the infant will wear only a diaper and protective eye patches; continue feedings as regularly as possible, with brief breaks from the lights; the therapy is painless but can cause slight skin irritation or diarrhea; and treatment usually lasts 1-3 days.

Jaundice itself cannot always be prevented, but there are ways to reduce its severity. These include feeding the infant q2-3h, ensuring proper latch and milk transfer if breastfeeding, considering supplementation w/ formula if recommended by the provider, and exposing the infant to indirect sunlight through a window for short periods.

Educating the mother on when to contact her provider would also be imperative. Some scenarios include if jaundice appears within 24 hours of birth, the yellow tinting spreads or becomes more intense, the infant develops a fever or seems lethargic as evidenced by poor feeding or taking breaks while feeding, and if jaundice lasts for more than 3 weeks.