

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 inform the mother that Jaundice is the yellowing that is seen in the skin, eyes, and mouth of many newborns. The reason it occurs is because a chemical called bilirubin builds up in the baby's blood. Their liver is not fully developed so it can not help in adding in the removal of bilirubin from the blood. Bilirubin is caused by the breakdown of the RBC. Infants' RBCs break down and replace faster than adults due, to their RBC having a shorter life span than that of a healthy adult. To treat it the newborn will undergo phototherapy. Phototherapy uses a special blue light that makes it easier for the liver to break down and remove the bilirubin from the baby's blood. This will expose as much of the newborn's skin as possible while protecting the infant's eyes and genitalia. There are a few ways that jaundice can be prevented. One is promoting adequate feeding, which results in the infant creating more stool that removes the bilirubin. Another common way is just getting the baby out into the sunlight for 30 to 60 minutes.