



Maternity Unit

Ensuring that your baby is kept warm and maintains their blood sugar levels after birth

Why is this important?

Following the birth, your baby may require some further observations to ensure that their temperature and their blood sugar levels are able to be maintained. If your baby becomes cold they may be at risk of developing hypothermia. Hypothermia is a condition where the body temperature drops to a low level. In a new-born, this occurs when the baby's temperature drops below 36.5C. This, in turn, may lead to hypoglycaemia. Hypoglycaemia is a condition where your baby has a lower blood sugar level than normal.

Babies who have a low temperature may have problems breathing, and those who struggle to maintain their blood sugar levels may require further support from admission to the Special Care Baby Unit.

Is my baby at risk of getting cold or having low blood sugar levels?

Some babies are more at risk of getting cold or having low blood sugar levels. These include:

- Preterm babies born at less than 37 weeks gestation.
- Babies with low birth weight, less than 2.5kgs at birth.
- Babies who are on the 2nd centile or below.
- Babies of Mothers who are diabetic.
- Babies who needed to be resuscitated at birth.
- Babies where the Mother had an infection in labour.
- Babies whose Mothers had prolonged rupture of membranes for more than 24 hours.
- Babies whose Mothers were Group B streptococcus positive during pregnancy.
- Babies who were born through meconium liquor.
- Babies of Mothers who have been taking maternal beta blockers or are on any hypertensive treatment.

However, all babies are susceptible to hypothermia in the first few hours after the birth, so it is important to take simple measures after the birth to keep your baby warm.

What will the staff do to ensure that my baby is kept warm?

- Ensure the temperature of the birth room is warm. (Windows should be closed, fans turned off and resuscitaire on).
- After the birth, your baby will be put up on to your abdomen and a towel placed on top to dry baby immediately. The wet towel is then replaced with a dry towel.
- You will be encouraged to have uninterrupted skin-to-skin contact with your baby.
- You will be encouraged to feed your baby within the first hour of birth.
- The midwife will check baby's temperature shortly after the birth to ensure that this is within normal range.

If your baby requires observing as per our guidelines for hypothermia and hypoglycaemia, your baby will receive a **RED WOOLLEN HAT** to wear until the staff have completed the observations. The hat will then be removed and baby will no longer require a hat in the hospital.

How can you help your baby?

As parents, you are vital members of the team in ensuring that your baby is kept warm. There are many things you can do to help:

- Tell us if you think the birth room is not warm enough. This is very important just before and in the hours after the birth.
- If your baby is no longer skin to skin, ensure that baby is adequately covered. Babies usually need one or two more layers of clothing or blankets than adults.
- Tell us if you think your baby is not warm enough; they should feel slightly warm to touch, although hands and feet can sometimes feel cooler.
- Tell us if you think your baby's breathing is not normal.
- Tell us if you notice that your baby is breathing very fast for a continuous period, or seems to be struggling to breathe, with nostrils flaring or making noises with each breath.
- Tell us if you see your baby become jittery (unprovoked, excessive, repetitive movements of limbs).

How long will the observations continue for?

The midwife will discuss with you the reason for the observations following the use of the **Red Woollen Hat**. The length of observations may be several hours. If your baby requires additional observations or further blood sugars, you will be informed by the staff.

Contact Numbers:

We hope that you have found this information useful. If you have any questions or are worried about anything, please ask one of the midwives or support workers.

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If you have feedback regarding the accuracy of the information contained in this leaflet, or if you would like a list of references used to develop this leaflet, please email pals@dchft.nhs.uk



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