

# Hypoglycemia: Low Blood Sugar in Newborns



## About hypoglycemia:

- Hypoglycemia is when the amount of sugar (glucose) in the blood is low.
- Most newborns will have blood glucose that is a little low in the first 2-3 hours after birth. This is normal and is not hypoglycemia.
- Hypoglycemia is temporary. Hypoglycemia that is severe or lasts too long may affect a baby's brain. This is very uncommon.
- Some newborns are routinely tested for hypoglycemia:
  - Newborns born to diabetic mothers
  - Premature or sick newborns
  - Underweight newborns
- Most babies with hypoglycemia look and act normal. But some may have these signs:
  - Not feed well
  - Breathe fast
  - Have pale or bluish skin color
  - Shake a little, which is called jitteriness
- Your baby's glucose may be tested if they have signs of hypoglycemia.
- Your baby may also be tested if they are at risk for hypoglycemia.
- A blood test may be taken by a prick from your baby's heel or a needle from a vein in their arm.

## Treatment:

- Mild hypoglycemia may only require frequent breastfeeding to improve the glucose. Holding your baby skin-to-skin will also help.
- In other cases, your baby may be given one or more of these treatments:
  - Your expressed breast milk
  - Pasteurized donor human milk
  - Glucose gel rubbed inside your baby's mouth
  - Baby formula (with your permission)
- If hypoglycemia is severe, your baby may need to go to a special care nursery or neonatal intensive care unit for IV glucose.
  - You should express your milk frequently and visit your baby as often as possible. You can breastfeed when your baby is ready.

## Breastfeeding and Hypoglycemia:

- Hypoglycemia does not mean there is anything wrong with your milk.
- Breastfeeding early and often helps your baby maintain healthy blood glucose levels.
- Holding your baby skin-to-skin can decrease hypoglycemia and help your baby breastfeed.
- If your baby is not feeding well, you may need to feed your baby expressed milk. You can express your milk by hand or with a pump. Expressing milk frequently helps your milk production.