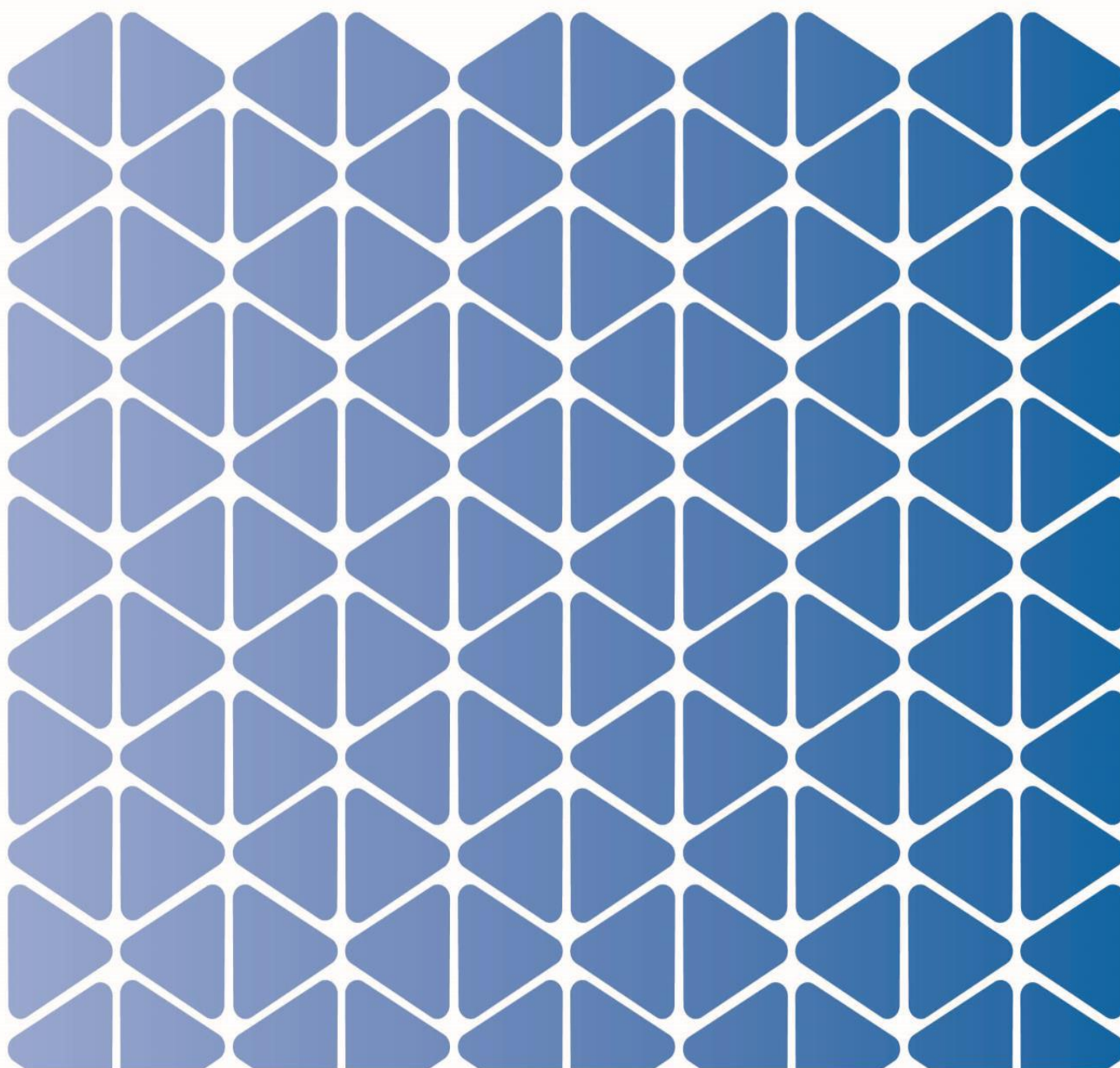


PATIENT INFORMATION**JAUNDICE, PHOTOTHERAPY
AND YOUR BABY**

01 What is jaundice?

- Jaundice in newborn babies is common and usually harmless. It causes yellowing of the skin and the whites of the eyes. Yellowing of the skin can be more difficult to see in brown or black skin. It might be easier to see on the palms of the hands or the soles of the feet.
- More worrying symptoms can include a baby being difficult to wake and/or reluctant to feed. Jaundice usually develops from 2 days of age and gets better within 2 weeks. If jaundice happens within the first 24 hours following birth, this will need further investigation.

02 Why does my baby have jaundice?

- Jaundice is caused by the build-up of bilirubin in the blood. Bilirubin is a yellow substance produced when red blood cells are broken down. Jaundice is common in newborn babies because babies have a high number of red blood cells in their blood, which are broken down and replaced frequently.
- A newborn baby's liver is not fully developed, so it is less effective at removing the bilirubin from the blood. Jaundice is more common in preterm (less than 37 weeks at birth) and late preterm (37-38 weeks at birth) babies.

03 How do you test for jaundice?

- To test for jaundice (bilirubin) your baby will have light placed onto their chest which shows the bilirubin level. If the result is high a blood test will be needed, blood will be collected by pricking their heel and a small tube will be filled.
- This will be sent to the labs and the results will usually take a few hours to come back. Once received a member of staff will plot the result on a phototherapy chart.
- If baby's result plots above the treatment line they will require phototherapy treatment.

04 What is Phototherapy?

- Phototherapy is treatment with a special blue light, which makes it easier for your baby's liver to break down and remove the bilirubin from their blood.
- Phototherapy exposes your baby's skin to as much light as possible. Your baby will need to just wear a nappy.
- During treatment, routine observations of baby will be taken.
- Baby's bilirubin level will be rechecked during treatment by repeating the blood tests.

- Once phototherapy is completed, we need to see your baby's bilirubin levels without treatment. This means we will need to do another blood test 12-18 hours after treatment ends (this is referred to as a 'rebound' value). This means that once phototherapy has finished, you will not be discharged straight away. You will be asked to stay in hospital until the rebound test results are back and within normal range.

05 Feeding and caring for baby receiving treatment.

- In most cases you will still be able to feed your baby while they have treatment.
- Jaundice can cause babies to be less wakeful, so they may not show regular cues to want to feed. If so, you will need to stimulate them regularly to feed. Aim for at least 8 feeds in 24 hours.
- Once the bilirubin has returned to normal level you can return to responsive feeding.

If your symptoms or condition worsens, or if you are concerned about anything, please call your GP, 111, or 999.

Patient Experience

We know that being admitted to hospital can be a difficult and unsettling time for you and your loved ones. If you have any questions or concerns, please do speak with a member of staff on the ward or in the relevant department who will do their best to answer your questions and reassure you.

Feedback

Feedback is really important and useful to us – it can tell us where we are working well and where improvements can be made. There are lots of ways you can share your experience with us including completing our Friends and Family Test – cards are available and can be posted on all wards, departments and clinics at our hospitals. We value your comments and feedback and thank you for taking the time to share this with us.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

If you have any concerns or questions about your care, we advise you to talk with the nurse in charge or the department manager in the first instance as they are best placed to answer any questions or resolve concerns quickly. If the relevant member of staff is unable to help resolve your concern, you can contact the PALS Team. We offer informal help, advice or support about any aspect of hospital services & experiences.

Our PALS team will liaise with the various departments in our hospitals on your behalf, if you feel unable to do so, to resolve your problems and where appropriate refer to outside help.

If you are still unhappy you can contact the Complaints Department, who can investigate your concerns. You can make a complaint orally, electronically or in writing and we can advise and guide you through the complaints procedure.

How to contact PALS:

Telephone Patient Services: 0300 123 1732 or via email at: wah-tr.PALS@nhs.net

Opening times:

The PALS telephone lines are open Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 4.00pm. Please be aware that you may need to leave a voicemail message, but we aim to return your call within one working day.

If you are unable to understand this leaflet, please communicate with a member of staff.