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**Jaundice**

**What is Jaundice?**

* A yellowish tinge to the skin which occurs in many newborns
* It is caused by the buildup of a chemical called bilirubin in the baby’s blood – this occurs while their liver is still maturing
* A mild case of jaundice is harmless
* Jaundice can become serious if the bilirubin level is high
* Jaundice is more common in breast feeding newborns who are not nursing well – do not hesitate to call the office if you are having trouble breastfeeding
* Your baby will be checked for jaundice in the hospital and in our office at their first visit
* If we suspect the baby is jaundice, we may send you to the lab for blood work to confirm – no need to worry, this is the best way to monitor the bilirubin level

**How is it treated?**

* Jaundice is quite treatable, but most cases require no treatment at all
  + In breast fed babies, jaundice may last up to three weeks
  + In formula-fed babies, jaundice usually resolves by two weeks
* If treatment is necessary, your baby will be placed under special lights when undressed – either at the hospital or at home
* Breast feeding mothers should feed at least eight to twelve times per day which will help produce enough milk to keep the bilirubin levels low

**When to call your pediatrician?**

* Your baby’s skin turns more yellow
* Your baby’s abdomen, arms or legs are yellow
* The whites of your baby’s eyes are yellow
* Your baby is jaundiced and is hard to wake, fussy, or not feeding well