

## Infant Phototherapy

Your doctor has prescribed a phototherapy light to treat your baby's jaundice (hyperbilirubinemia). Jaundice is common in newborn babies and is usually caused when the baby's liver has difficulty clearing bilirubin from the blood. The liver develops this ability within a short period of time. Phototherapy breaks down the bilirubin until the liver function is developed.

Although common and temporary, the excess bilirubin can be dangerous to your baby's health if left untreated. Phototherapy has been used for many years to treat jaundice. Initially, phototherapy was used in the hospital. The baby had to remain in the nursery while the mother was sent home. The separation of mother and baby at this very crucial time caused problems with breast feeding and bonding. Home phototherapy prevents this separation and effectively treats jaundice.

Your doctor will prescribe the amount of time that the baby should be under the phototherapy light. A log is provided for you to help keep track of the phototherapy time. You may be using a phototherapy blanket (shown in the picture) or a "suitcase" model phototherapy light. Both systems have advantages and disadvantages and both are effective in treating jaundice. The following safety measures should be observed:



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### ***Suitcase Phototherapy Unit:***

- Make sure that the unit is on a level surface that is large enough to keep the unit from tipping or falling. A large table, the floor, or baby's crib is suitable. Position the suitcase in an area where it is not in danger of being bumped or tipped. Also, keep the unit away from drafts or cold air.
- Make sure that all of the fluorescent lights are operating. If any of the lights are not working, call Preferred Homecare. The baby should be placed in the unit before the lights are turned on. You should receive eye patches or other types of eye covering. Make sure that baby's eyes are covered during phototherapy. The eye covering can be removed when the baby is taken out of the unit for feeding or other activities. If baby is sleeping under the lights, be sure to change baby's position at least every 2 hours.

### **Bili-Blanket:**

- The biliblanket is used in the same way as a regular baby blanket and enables the baby to be held during phototherapy. The blanket is attached to the light source by a cable. With the bili-blanket, the baby's eyes do not need to be covered and baby's skin is exposed to the light on all surfaces of the blanket. In addition, baby can be fed during therapy.

### **Care Considerations and Safety:**

Baby's clothing should be removed during phototherapy except for an open diaper for girls or a diaper that covers the genitals for boys. Be sure to check baby's temperature during the treatment. Baby's temperature should be between 97.7 to 98.6 degrees. For phototherapy, an axillary temperature or ear thermometer can be used. Be sure to leave a standard thermometer in baby's arm pit for at least 5 minutes for an accurate reading. Check baby's temperature about every 30 minutes during the first hour of therapy and then about every 2 hours. If baby's temperature is less than 97 degrees or more than 99 degrees, take the temperature again in 15 minutes. If it is still too low or too high, please call baby's doctor.

Baby should be fed every 2-3 hours and may need extra water. Adequate fluids are important when jaundice is present. Because the bilirubin that is broken down is eliminated in baby's stool, the stool may have a greenish tint. This coloration is expected when treating jaundice.

### **Contact Your Doctor if any of the Following Symptoms Occur:**

- Baby is less responsive or is more irritable
- Absent or infrequent stools or wet diapers
- Fever or abnormally low temperature
- Sore spots or redness on baby's skin
- Increase in jaundice despite use of the lights





**Preferred Homecare**

*LifeCare Solutions*

### Phototherapy Log

The log can be used to record information about phototherapy for your baby. Take the log with you to doctor visits.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time	Lights On <input type="checkbox"/>	Baby's Position Side, Back, Stomach	Temperature	Fluids/ Amount	Wet Diaper	Stool
8 AM						
9						
10						
11						
Noon						
1 PM						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						
11						
Midnight						
1 AM						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

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2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

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