

Neonatal parenteral nutrition

Information for the public

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www.nice.org.uk

Care for newborn babies who need parenteral nutrition

Parenteral nutrition means giving nutrition to babies directly into their bloodstream through a vein (intravenously). Parenteral nutrition provides babies with vital energy and nutrients to help them grow. It is used when a baby cannot take milk feeds. This may be because the baby was born very early (before 31 weeks of pregnancy), or because the baby is unwell or has problems with their bowel that mean they can't have normal milk feeds for a while.

We want this guideline to make a difference to babies and their families by making sure:

- babies who need parenteral nutrition are started on it without delay
- care teams know how to start and build up parenteral feeds to meet babies' energy needs
- feeds have the right balance of nutrients for each baby
- babies are monitored closely but using as few blood tests as possible
- babies are weaned off parenteral feeding and onto milk feeds as soon as they are ready.

Making decisions together

Decisions about treatment and care are best when they are made together. The care team looking after your baby should give you clear information about your baby's care, talk with you about the different options and listen carefully to your views and concerns. They should also:

- explain why your baby needs parenteral nutrition and how long it is likely to last
- explain what's involved in giving a baby parenteral nutrition
- explain how your baby's progress will be monitored and how and when they might be able to progress onto milk feeds
- help ensure that you feel involved in your baby's day-to-day care (for example, holding your baby).

If you don't feel you have the information you need or have questions about the information you are given, tell your baby's care team.

Read more about [making decisions about your care](#).

Where can I find out more?

The NHS website has information about [special care for ill or premature babies](#).

The organisations below can give you more advice and support.

- [Bliss](#) – for babies born premature or sick, 020 7378 1122
- [NCT](#), 0300 330 0700
- [Sands](#) – stillbirth and neonatal death charity, 0808 164 3332
- [Together for short lives](#), 0808 8088 100
- [Tommy's](#), 0800 0147 800
- [Twins Trust](#), 0800 138 0509

NICE is not responsible for the content of these websites.

To share an experience of care you have received, contact your [local Healthwatch](#).

We wrote this guideline with parents and carers of babies who have needed parenteral nutrition, and staff who provide treatment and support. All the decisions are based on the best research available.

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