

HOME PHOTOTHERAPY PROGRAM

WHAT IS PHOTOTHERAPY?

Phototherapy is a light treatment for newborn jaundice. This treatment is offered in your home through the Home Phototherapy Program if your baby is eligible.

WHAT IS THE HOME PHOTOTHERAPY PROGRAM?

The Home Phototherapy Program is offered by Children's Emergency Department and Public Health. Your baby's treatment begins in the Emergency Department and carries on with you in your home. The Public Health Nurse and the pediatrician will check your baby's progress daily and provide support. The treatment usually lasts about 3-4 days.

WHAT HAPPENS IN THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT?

To help decide if your baby needs phototherapy:

- An Emergency Room Physician examines your baby
- A blood test is done to check your baby's bilirubin levels

The Nurse will review how to use the *BiliBlanket*[®] (phototherapy light), explain how the phototherapy works and answer questions you may have.

If you require extra breastfeeding support at home, please let your Nurse know so this request can be added to your Public Health Referral. Please note breastfeeding support is offered during regular business hours and you can call the Breastfeeding Hotline during non-business hours.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I GO HOME?

When you go home you will restart your baby on the *BiliBlanket*[®] as explained at the hospital. The Emergency Department staff will send a referral to the Public Health Nurse to let them know of your enrollment in the Home Phototherapy Program. The Public Health Nurse will provide follow-up, teaching and support once they have received the referral.

Along with phototherapy, making sure your baby gets enough formula or breastmilk is important in the treatment of jaundice and keeping your baby hydrated. It is still important to continue skin-to-skin contact while feeding your baby while they are on the phototherapy light.

The Public Health Nurse will provide support to help you with breastfeeding your baby if needed. Please refer to your booklet "*Caring for your Newborn*" which you received in hospital after birth.

The Public Health Nurse will:

- Take a blood sample from your baby's foot and send it to the lab at the Health Sciences Centre for testing the bilirubin levels
- Be in contact with you and your baby's pediatrician about your baby's blood test results
- Assess your baby's jaundice
- Assess your baby's feeding
- Weigh your baby
- Provide support for you and your family
- Answer any questions you may have

If you have not heard from the Public Health Nurse within 24 hours of leaving the Emergency Department, please contact the Public Health Nurse assigned to you after birth or call Central Intake at 204-940-2362 or After Hours (4:30pm-8:30am, weekends & holidays) at 204-788-8327.

WHEN WILL PHOTOTHERAPY BE STOPPED?

Your baby's phototherapy will be stopped when the bilirubin test is within safe range. When the Public Health Nurse receives the result, they will:

- Be in contact with your baby's pediatrician about stopping treatment
- Call you and ask you to stop the treatment
- Return the next day to do one more blood test

If the last bilirubin level remains in the normal range, the Public Health Nurse will call you to let you know.

WHAT DO I DO WITH THE BILIBLANKET?

The Public Health Nurse will send a courier to pick up the *BiliBlanket*[®]. If you still have the *BiliBlanket*[®] within 2-3 business days after treatment has stopped, please call your Public Health Nurse or Children's Emergency Department (ask for the Clinical Resource Nurse) at 204-787-4244 for information on how to return the equipment.

WHO DO I CALL IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions or concerns about any of the following, please call:

- Breastfeeding: Breastfeeding Hotline: 204-788-8667.
- Baby's Health: call your pediatrician or Health Links at 204-788-8200.
- In an Emergency: call 911 or take your baby to the nearest Emergency Department.

Next Review: September, 2026