

Neonatal jaundice and Sudden infant death

Neonatal jaundice is a very common condition affecting more than 50% of newborn infants. Physiological jaundice is due to accumulation of bilirubin in the blood, released as a result of rapid breakdown of haemoglobin. Most babies have physiologic jaundice, which usually occur on day 3-7. Mild jaundice is harmless, but in unusual situations, the bilirubin can get very high and might cause brain damage. Jaundice can be treated by phototherapy. If jaundice occurs within first 24 hours, level is high, rapid rise or persists for more than 2 weeks, or has other associated symptom the baby should be worked up for possible underlying causes i.e. pathological jaundice. Common causes of pathological jaundice include haemolysis due to G6PD deficiency, infection, liver or biliary problems.

Sudden Infant Death (SIDS) is a rare but a very threatening condition. It can happen to any baby less than 1 year with the highest risk occurring at two to four months. The most important risk factors includes infants sleeping with face down, cold winter time, mother smoke during pregnancy or parent smoking in the same room, baby born premature. To prevent SID, parents should take precautions including maintaining a health pregnancy, put baby to sleep on the back, keep the baby's room well ventilated; breast feed the baby, and have baby undergoing regular body check and immunization.