

Keeping Babies Warm

WHAT IS HYPOTHERMIA?


Newborn babies, especially premature or low birth-weight infants, are at risk of hypothermia after birth. Hypothermia occurs when a baby's temperature falls below 36.5°C.

WHY IT MATTERS

Hypothermia can lead to serious illness in babies & avoidable admissions to the neonatal unit. They may be subject to invasive procedures due to hypothermia-associated problems such as:

- Low blood sugar, lethargy & poor feeding
- Breathing difficulties
- Infection

SEVERITY OF HYPOTHERMIA



Normal Temp 36.5 – 37.5°C
Cold Stress Temp 36.0 – 36.4°C
Moderate Hypothermia Temp 32.0 – 35.9°C
Severe Hypothermia Temp < 32°C

HOW TO PREVENT HYPOTHERMIA IN THE LABOUR WARD

Keep “THE WARM CHAIN”

Before Birth

1. Maintain temperature in delivery room between 25°C – 28°C
2. Close windows & doors, turn off air conditioning & fans, set radiant warmer to prewarm mode
3. Prewarm 2 pieces of soft cotton cloths/towels and a woollen hat



At birth

4. When born, place skin to skin on mother's abdomen then dry and stimulate baby
5. Discard wet towel and cover baby with second prewarmed towel/cloth and a hat
6. Resuscitate following unit protocols under the prewarmed radiant warmer if needed



After birth

7. Maintain skin to skin with mother
8. Initiate breastfeeding within one hour of delivery
9. Delay weighing for 1 hour and delay bathing for 24 hours



During transfer to the newborn unit if needed

10. Keep mother and baby skin to skin in KMC position. Plastic wraps may be used for preterms if mother/caregiver is unavailable