

UNDERSTANDING Neonatal Hyperglycemia

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What is blood sugar (blood glucose)?

Blood sugar is the amount of sugar (glucose) in the blood.

Food gives the body sugar to use for energy. A baby takes in sugar from feedings or **intravenous (IV)** fluids. The sugar is carried as glucose in the blood. Glucose is used for energy by all the cells in the body. This helps a baby to move, gain weight, and grow.

What is neonatal hyperglycemia?

Hyperglycemia is a high level of sugar (glucose) in the blood. **Neonatal** hyperglycemia is high blood sugar in a newborn baby.

What causes high blood sugar?

There are many reasons why a baby may have high blood sugar. The reasons can be different for each baby.

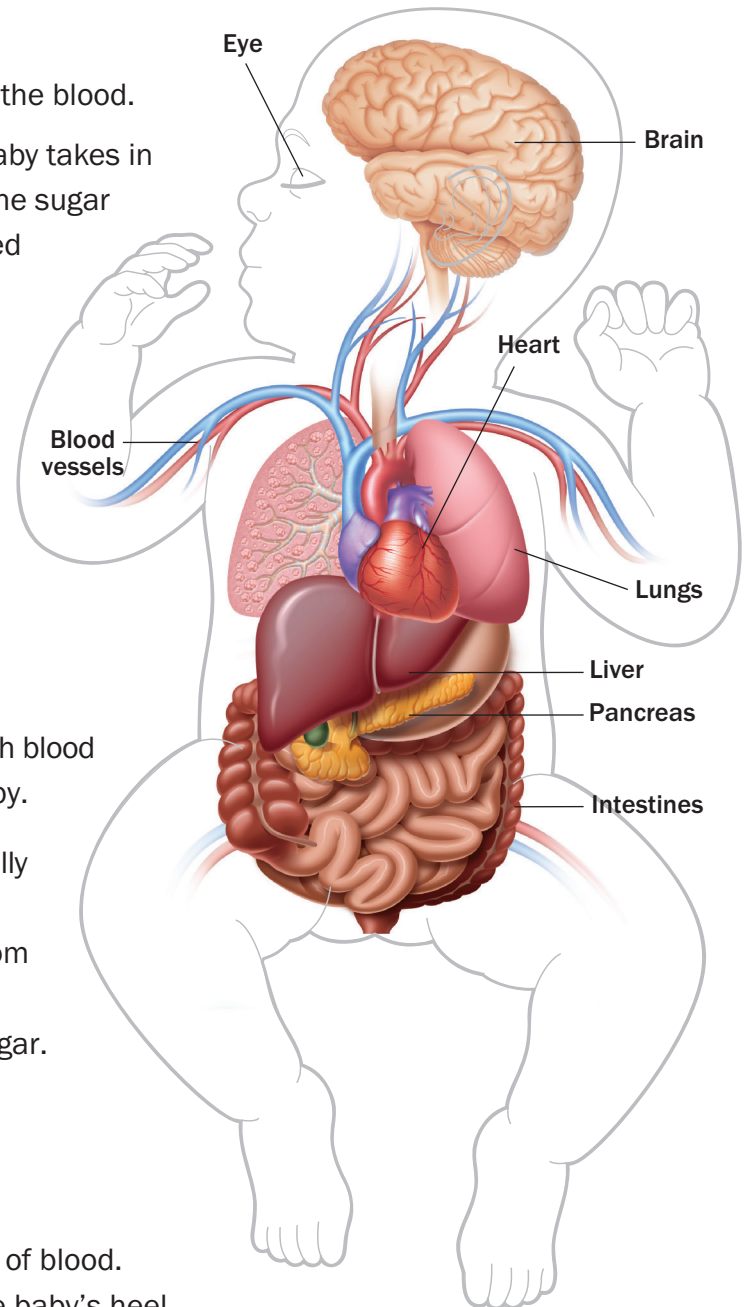
High blood sugar can be seen in any baby especially sick or premature babies. It can also be caused by some medicines. Babies who have stress from things such as infection, breathing problems, or **metabolic disease** may also have high blood sugar.

How does the doctor know if a baby has high blood sugar?

A blood sugar test can be done with a few drops of blood. Blood can often be taken from a tiny stick on the baby's heel. The test shows if blood sugar is low, normal, or high.

How can high blood sugar affect my baby?

High blood sugar in a newborn can mean a higher chance of certain health problems. These include problems with the eyes, brain, or nerves. There can also be a higher chance of infection or problems with the gut. Not all babies with high blood sugar will have these problems.



Understanding Neonatal Hyperglycemia (continued)

How is high blood sugar treated?

Treatment can be different for each baby depending on the reasons for high blood sugar. The doctor will adjust the baby's feedings along with any IV fluids the baby is getting.

- The health care team will also help to reduce stress in the baby by treating the underlying cause
- The doctor may give **insulin** to the baby or use other ways to lower blood sugar
- Not every baby will need to get insulin

What will happen next?

The health care team will watch the baby over time to check blood sugar levels and treatments. They will keep testing until the blood sugar stays in the normal range. Every baby is different. Your health care team will talk with you about what is best for your baby.

Glossary

Blood glucose – the amount of glucose (sugar) in the blood

Blood sugar – another name for blood glucose

Glucose – a type of sugar the body uses for energy

Hormone – a chemical in the body that helps control body functions. Insulin is one kind of hormone

Hyperglycemia – too much sugar in the blood

Insulin – hormone that helps control blood sugar levels

Intravenous (IV) – through the vein

Metabolic disease – a disease that affects how a baby processes food

Neonatal – newborn

Ask the health care team when you have questions—they are there to help.

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