



Is my baby jaundiced?

When the body breaks down red blood cells, it excretes a yellow substance called bilirubin. Jaundice is the yellowing of the skin caused by the body's inability to excrete bilirubin. This can be common in the early days when the liver is still immature and not able to filter well.

High bilirubin levels can be dangerous, although it is not common for them to get into that range. Low levels are common, and since it is often a slow progression, you as the parent may not notice the changing color. Often, the whites of the eyes are the location that may be the most evident.

The coloring alone is not necessarily indicative of a problem. As jaundice worsens, it can cause babies to become very sleepy, and a sleepy baby does not eat well. Since the bilirubin is excreted through waste, we need the baby to eat often and well to achieve good poops and pees to bring the level down.