

What is blood glucose?

Blood glucose is also called **blood sugar**.

- Glucose is sugar found in the blood
- It is the body's main source of energy
- Glucose moves through the bloodstream and provides energy to all of the body's cells
- The body needs glucose to function, grow and develop

Some babies are more likely to have low blood sugar in the hours or days of life after birth.

Sometimes newborn babies have low glucose levels for different reasons:

- Born early; before 37 weeks of pregnancy
- Smaller than expected
- Larger than expected
- Born to mothers with diabetes during pregnancy
- Born to mothers taking certain medicines
- Born with health problems, like infections or breathing problems
- Other less common reasons

How is blood sugar checked?

A small amount of blood is taken from your baby's heel or vein. It may be tested at the bedside or sent to the lab.



How is low blood sugar treated?

- Breastfeed your baby often
- Give extra feeds with pumped or donor human milk, or breast-milk substitute (formula)
- Some babies need an intravenous (IV) to give them some sugar

Your nurse may check your baby's blood sugar often



Can I tell if my baby's blood sugar is low?

Your baby **may** seem:

- Jittery (shaky)
- Very sleepy (lethargic)
- To be feeding poorly

(These symptoms can be seen in babies with normal blood sugar.)

Talk to your doctor or nurse any time:

- Your baby seems to have low blood sugar
- You have any questions about your baby's blood sugar
- Have questions or concerns about your baby's feeding
- You have any other questions

References:

Hamilton Health Sciences (2007) Blood Glucose in Newborn Babies. Pamphlet
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