Neonatal Infection

Newborn babies are at an increased risk of developing a serious infection because they have an immature immune system. Infections are likely in newborns when they have a fever. Pneumonia, urinary tract infections, meningitis, and many viruses can be the cause of these infections. Checking to see if there is an infection may require blood and urine tests, cultures, chest x-rays, or even spinal fluid examination.

SYMPTOMS

- Temperatures taken rectally below 97.9°F (36.6°C) or over 100.4° F (38°C).
- Poor feeding.
- Breathing problems.
- Baby is less active, or is irritable.
- Rash or change in color of skin.

TREATMENT

Newborns and infants with these symptoms may require hospital care. IV (intravenous) fluids and antibiotics may be given in the hospital. Infants and children that do not look seriously ill may have a virus infection when they run a fever. In this case, antibiotics may not be prescribed.

Giving an antibiotic reduces the risk of complications, but can cause side effects and allergic reactions. Follow-up with your baby's doctor is important.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- Your infant has a seizure, breathing problems, or uncontrolled fever.
- Your infant has drowsiness, inability to feed, or vomiting.

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