

What you and your care providers can do to help:

All babies can and should:

- be comforted with a quiet room
- have skin-to-skin contact with mother
- be wrapped in a blanket (called swaddling)
- be held and cuddled
- be in a room with dim lights.

Doing these things can improve the infant's withdrawal symptoms.

Breastfeeding:

Breastfeeding can be a safe option with most medications—discuss your feeding plans with your baby's care team.



How long will my baby need to stay in the hospital?

Your baby will stay in the hospital for at least 3-5 days to monitor for signs of withdrawal. Babies that need morphine treatment may require hospitalization for 1-2 weeks.

Going Home:

- Once your baby goes home, you will need to see a health care provider within 24-48 hours.
- At home you should look for signs of withdrawal for a few more days. If you see any signs of withdrawal, call your pediatric provider or UNC Pediatrics at 919-923-2026.
- It is important that you tell your child's health care provider about the medications you were taking during pregnancy.



Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome

Information for parents

What is Newborn Abstinence Syndrome (NAS)?

NAS is the term for a group of signs a baby may have when it withdraws from prescribed or illicit drugs that a mother took during pregnancy.



What causes NAS?

Many medications are passed from mother to baby across the placenta during pregnancy. Drugs like heroin or opioid medications to treat pain can cause addiction in the mother. These drugs may also cause the baby to become physically dependent on the drugs before birth. Once the baby is born and the baby is no longer being exposed to these drugs, the baby can show withdrawal signs.

How is NAS diagnosed?

When your baby is born a urine sample and a stool (meconium) sample will be sent for a drug test. The nurses will begin watching your baby very closely for signs of withdrawal. Every four hours they will ask you if you have seen any signs of withdrawal in your baby. They will enter the presence and/or absence of withdrawal symptoms into the computer and assign your infant an "Opiate Weaning Score". These scores are continuously monitored throughout your child's hospital stay. Higher scores indicate that a baby is showing withdrawal signs and may need treatment.



When does NAS occur?

Not all babies who are exposed to opiates during pregnancy will experience withdrawal. . For infants who were exposed to methadone or Suboxone withdrawal signs usually appear 48-72 hours after birth.

Symptoms of NAS:

- Irritability/excessive crying
- High-pitched crying
- Trembling or jittery
- Difficulty sleeping
- Tight muscle tone
- Hyperactive (overactive) reflexes
- Seizures
- Frequent yawning, stuffy nose, and sneezing
- Poor feeding or trouble gaining weight
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Dehydration
- Fever or unstable temperature

How is NAS treated?

If opiate weaning scores are increasing, your infant may require treatment with morphine. This is given as a very small amount and the dose is adjusted to meet your baby's needs.