

Outlook (Prognosis)

Treatment helps relieve symptoms of withdrawal. Drug use during pregnancy can lead to many health problems in the baby.

Prevention

Discuss all medications with your health care provider. If you are using drugs ask your health care provider for help with stopping as soon as possible. Practice good self-care and keep yourself and your baby safe and healthy.

Pastoral Philosophy of Care

The birth of a baby is miraculous. It is a defining season in our lives. Our pastoral goal is to help you navigate and thrive in the transitions of relationships and emotions. As part of the Birth Center and the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit our philosophy of care includes:

- Wellness for Mom and baby
- Optimal emotional and spiritual support
- We respect personal religious views, cultural values, and the right to privacy and confidentiality.
- Mother and infant are cared for as a family unit, even if they are separated at times
- Theologically we value life as precious. We are created in the image of God (Imago Dei). – Psalm 139

We're Here for You & Your Baby

- Utilize the parent notebook as well as the medical staff for education and help in caring for your baby.
- Dealing with Child Protective Services (CPS) can be intimidating and threatening. Our social worker can interpret and facilitate communication with CPS.
- Social Work and Pastoral Care can provide community resources beyond hospitalization for your family.
- Chaplains can provide spiritual resources for your inner strength and peace in navigating NAS and facilitating wellness for you and your baby.

Chaplain Bob
rkoch@chs-mi.com
989.583.6042



PASTORAL CARE



Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome

Robert Koch
STAFF CHAPLAIN

www.covenantpastoralcare.com

What is Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS)

Neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS) is a group of problems that occur in a newborn who was exposed to addictive illegal or prescription drugs while in the mother's womb.

Causes

Neonatal abstinence syndrome occurs because a pregnant woman takes addictive illicit or prescription drugs.

The medication passes through the placenta to the baby during pregnancy. The placenta is the organ that connects the baby to its mother in the womb. The baby becomes addicted along with the mother.

At birth, the baby is still dependent on the drug. Because the baby is no longer getting the drug after birth, symptoms of withdrawal may occur.

Symptoms

The symptoms of neonatal abstinence syndrome depend on:

- The type of drug the mother used
- How the mother's body breaks down the drug
- How much of the drug she was taking
- How long she used the drug
- Whether the baby was born full-term or early (premature)

Symptoms depend on the drug involved. They may begin immediately or take days to appear.

Symptoms may include:

- Blotchy skin coloring
- Diarrhea
- Excessive crying or high-pitched crying
- Excessive sucking
- Fever
- Hyperactive reflexes
- Increased muscle tone
- Irritability
- Poor feeding
- Rapid breathing
- Seizures
- Sleep problems
- Slow weight gain
- Sneezing
- Sweating
- Trembling (tremors)
- Vomiting

Assessment and Treatment

It is important to know that in the diagnosis of NAS, not all of these symptoms may occur or they could occur in combination and at various degrees.

In the Covenant Neonatal Intensive Care Unit we use a NAS scoring system called the Finnegan Scale. This assessment tool is available to parents in the NAS Educational Guide from your physician or nurse.

In determining the treatment, the physician tracks the scores and determines the best plan of care.

Treatment

Treatment depends on:

- The drug involved
- The infant's overall health
- Whether the baby was born full-term or premature

The health care team will watch the newborn carefully for signs of withdrawal, feeding problems and weight gain. Babies who vomit or who are very dehydrated may need to get fluids through a vein (intravenously).

Infants with neonatal abstinence syndrome are often fussy and hard to calm. Ways to calm the infant down include:

- Gently rocking the child
- Reducing noise and lights
- Swaddling the baby in a blanket
- Encouraging sleep

Some babies with severe symptoms need medicine to treat withdrawal symptoms.

The physician may prescribe the infant a drug similar to the one the mother used during pregnancy and slowly decrease the dose over time. This helps wean the baby off the drug and relieve some withdrawal symptoms.

Babies with this condition often have poor feeding or slow growth. Such babies may need:

- A higher-calorie formula that provides greater nutrition
- Smaller portions given more often