

Information for parents and carers

Pain relief for babies

Babies on the Neonatal Unit may experience varying degrees of discomfort or pain. Babies cannot verbalise their pain and depend on others to recognise, assess and manage it for them. So please let a member of the team know if you think that your baby is in pain. We will always try to make procedures less painful for your baby. We use a pain assessment tool to help us ensure effective pain assessment. Appropriate pain relieving methods will then be put into place.

Signs that your baby may be in pain

- Crying
- Not sleeping / restlessness
- Grimacing or frowning
- Tightly fisted hands or feet
- A tense body
- Not very active, drowsy or sleepy

Some procedures, such as having a cannula sited and blood taken, or being on a ventilator may be uncomfortable for infants, and most babies need medication for this. As well as medication there are other things that can be done by you or the nursing staff to relieve your baby's pain or discomfort.

What we can do to help without medication

- Keep your baby in a comfortable position
- Keep the area as dark as possible
- Gentle rocking of your baby in their cot, or in your arms
- Massage

- Wrapping your baby snugly, or containment holding
- Use of a dummy
- Breastfeeding, if your baby is able
- The sound of your voice
- White noise or soft music
- Skin to skin (Kangaroo care)
- Also remember that some babies like to be left alone, as over stimulation can cause further stress

What medications are available?

There are three commonly used drugs on the Neonatal Unit that can be used for pain relief:

- **24% sucrose:** This is a liquid which is given before any procedure which might be painful. It is dripped onto the tip of your baby's tongue and can be followed by the use of a dummy to enhance its action. It works very quickly with no adverse effect.
- **Paracetamol:** This is used for mild pain relief or fever. It is given orally in liquid form. This may be given on a regular basis or as your baby needs it.
- **Morphine:** This is used when babies are ventilated and require intensive care. It is usually given as a continuous infusion via an intravenous drip. Small doses may be given before breathing support is started. Morphine is gradually reduced when your baby is being weaned from the ventilator.

We will always work with you to do all we can to keep your baby free from pain and discomfort.

If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (the new name for DisabledGo) <https://www.accessable.co.uk/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust>

