

# Antibiotics

## Why does my baby need an antibiotic?

Your baby has probably been diagnosed with some kind of infection. Babies can get infections for a number of reasons; your doctor will discuss the type of infection with you.

Some babies *might* have an infection. For many babies born prematurely, the question often is *why* were they born prematurely? An infection may be the reason. Blood cultures will be drawn (a sample of blood will be taken to see if there are germs in the blood). We don't find out the final result of these tests for about 3 days. We will place the baby on antibiotics until the final result of the blood culture comes back.

If the test is positive for an infection, your baby will stay on antibiotics. If the test is negative for an infection, the antibiotics will be stopped. We give the antibiotics prophylactically for these 3 days---essentially, we'd rather be safe than sorry.

Besides an infection in the blood, a baby can have an infection elsewhere---on the skin, in the fluid surrounding the brain, in the intestines, in the urine, etc.

## What types of antibiotics are given?

It depends on what type of infection your baby has. Some antibiotics given frequently in the NICU are: Ampicillin, Gentamycin, Vancomycin, Piperacillin, and Acyclovir. There are numerous other antibiotics that may be given depending on what type of infection there is.

## How long will my baby be on antibiotics?

It depends on what type of infection your baby has---the usual dose is 7-10 days. Occasionally it is 14-21 days. The least amount of time would be the 3 day prophylactic dose.