

Eye Check for Newborn Babies

Information for parents

All babies born under 30 weeks gestation or under 1250g at birth will have their eyes checked by an eye specialist (Ophthalmologist). Some other babies who are not in this group will also have their eyes checked if they are thought to be at risk of eye problems.

This eye examination is carried out when the baby is at least six weeks old and weighs over 1000g.

We screen these babies because of the risk of an eye condition called Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP).

The main cause of concern for the development of ROP is prematurity and the amount of oxygen treatment required.

ROP affect the developing blood vessels of the retina which lines the back of the eye.

Mild degrees of ROP recover completely. More severe ROP can often be treated effectively if detected in time.

Sometimes your baby's doctor may want the eye specialist to see your baby's eyes for reasons other than the routine screening for ROP. This will be discussed with you.

To enable this examination, eye drops are used to dilate the pupils.

The eye specialist comes to NICU to do this examination at your baby's bedside. If your baby has been discharged home you will be asked to return to NICU for the appointment.

The results of your baby's eye examination will be discussed with you. If the examination is abnormal or if it is thought that the baby is still at risk the examination will be repeated at various intervals (usually 1-4 weeks).