

INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT OF CHILDHOOD ILLNESS

Participant Manual

MANAGEMENT OF THE SICK YOUNG INFANT AGE UP TO 2 MONTHS

2019

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Management of the sick young infant aged up to 2 months: participant manual

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INTRODUCTION

In this module you will learn to manage a sick young infant, defined as an infant aged up to 2 months. This includes the neonatal period, which is the first 4 weeks of life. The process is very similar to the one on managing the sick child age 2 months up to 5 years. All the steps are in the Chart Booklet, Management of the Sick Young Infant Age up to 2 Months:

Assess

Classify

Treat

Counsel the mother

Follow-up

Young infants have special characteristics that must be considered when assessing and classifying their illness. In the first few days of life, newborn infants are often sick from conditions related to pregnancy, labour and delivery or they may have trouble breathing due to immature lungs. These conditions include birth asphyxia, birth trauma, preterm birth and early-onset infections such as sepsis from premature ruptured membranes. Newborns who have any of these conditions need immediate attention.

Severe infections are the most common serious illness during the first two months of life. Young infants can become sick and die very quickly from serious bacterial infections. Infections are particularly more dangerous in low birth weight infants. Young infants differ from older infants and children in the way they manifest signs of infection. They frequently have only non-specific signs such as difficulty in feeding, reduced movements, fever or low body temperature. Lower chest indrawing is another clinical sign that is different in young infants. Only severe lower chest indrawing is an important sign of severe disease. Mild chest indrawing is normal in young infants because their chest wall is soft.

For these reasons, you will assess, classify and treat the young infant somewhat differently than an older infant or young child. The young infant charts list the special signs to assess and classify young infants and instructions on treatment. You will use these charts for sick young infants, including newborns, from birth up to 2 months of age.

Skilled care provided to the mother during labour and delivery and to the newborn immediately after birth can prevent many complications. It is therefore recommended that all births should be

attended by health workers skilled in delivery and immediate newborn care. Guidance on care during delivery and immediate newborn care is not included in the IMCI chart. It is available in the *WHO Pregnancy, Childbirth, Postpartum and Newborn Care: A guide for essential practice* (http://www.who.int/making_pregnancy_safer/publications/PCPNC_2006_03b.pdf).

To assess and classify a sick young infant, you will first ask the mother or another family member about the young infant's problems.

Then you will check **all** young infants for possible serious bacterial infection or very severe disease, pneumonia and local bacterial infection. This is done because young infants may often only have general signs of illness, which may not be well-recognized as signs of illness by the mother. The signs included in the chart are based on evidence from a recent, large multi-centre research study. They can detect severe disease in the young infant, including potentially serious conditions related to labour and delivery which are common in the first week of life as well as severe bacterial infections.

Then you will check **all** young infants for the presence of jaundice and HIV infection. You will assess and classify young infants for feeding problem or low weight for age, check the infants' immunization status and assess diarrhoea and other problems mentioned by the mother.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This module will describe the following tasks and allow you to practice some of them (some will be practiced in the clinic):

- Assessing and classifying a young infant for possible serious bacterial infection or very severe disease, pneumonia, and local bacterial infection
- Assessing and classifying for jaundice
- Assessing and classifying a young infant with diarrhoea
- Assessing and classifying a young infant for HIV infection
- Checking for a feeding problem or low weight for age, assessing breastfeeding and classifying feeding
- Checking the young infant's immunization status

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