



# BRIGHAM AND WOMEN'S HOSPITAL

## Neonatal Intensive Care Unit

### Parent Information Sheet: [Therapeutic Hypothermia or Whole Body Cooling for Newborns](#)

#### What is therapeutic hypothermia?

Therapeutic hypothermia (or whole body cooling) is the process of cooling the baby's body temperature to 33.5° C (92.3° F) to help lessen or prevent brain injury. The baby is placed on a cooling mattress with his/her temperature monitored very closely. The treatment lasts up to 72 hours, after which your baby is slowly re-warmed to natural body temperature.

#### Why do some babies receive this treatment?

An infant born at 34 weeks or older may receive whole body cooling if the NICU team is concerned your baby experienced a decrease in oxygen or blood delivery to his/her brain. Cerebral (brain) protection is the goal of this therapy.

#### What happens during therapeutic hypothermia?

Cooling starts as soon as possible within the first 6 hours of life. An EEG (electroencephalogram) is done by placing sticky leads on the baby's head and looking at his/her brain waves. Your baby will need an IV placed. He/she may also need a special long IV placed in his/her umbilical cord to provide nutrition and easy access for blood draws. Your baby may need a small dose of medicine to keep him/her comfortable during the treatment. After 72 hrs of therapy, your baby's body temperature is slowly warmed back to normal. This "re-warming" takes 15 hours.

#### Can I hold my baby during therapeutic hypothermia?

Yes!!!!

#### What are the benefits of therapeutic hypothermia?

Therapeutic hypothermia has been shown to improve survival and neurologic outcomes. If a baby has experienced a decrease in oxygen or blood flow to the brain, the brain cells can be injured. Cooling gives the brain cells time to heal before needing to work at full speed.

#### Are there any risks associated with therapeutic hypothermia?

There have been several studies looking at the risks of whole body cooling. No major risks have been found.

#### What if I have more questions?

Ask, ask, ask!!!!

### Whole Body Cooling Highlights

- For babies born at 34 weeks or older
- Body temperature is cooled to 33.5 C or 92.3 F
- Lasts for up to 72 hrs
- Helps to lessen or prevent brain injury
- An MRI is done at the end of therapy
- EEG is monitored



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