



NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S
When your child needs a hospital, everything matters.™

Helping Hand™

Health Education for Patients and Families

Whole Body Cooling (Therapeutic Hypothermia)

While in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU), your baby is getting a special kind of care, called **whole body cooling** (also called therapeutic hypothermia). This treatment lowers body temperature so the body slows down and uses less energy. It lets the body heal faster from a rough start at the time of birth.

How the treatment is done

- Your baby lies on a special blanket that has water running inside it.
 - The blanket can warm or cool the body.
 - Your baby will have a special thermometer put into their throat. We use this thermometer because we need to know that we are cooling the whole baby, not just the skin on the outside.
 - A cord connects the thermometer to the blanket's temperature controls. That way, water inside the blanket can heat up or cool down to keep the temperature at the set level.
- You may be able to hold your baby, wrapped in the cooling blanket, for brief times during the treatment (Picture 1). The cooling blanket needs to stay on at all times to keep their body's temperature at the set level.
- The treatment lasts for 3 days. Your baby's body will then be slowly warmed to a natural body temperature.



Picture 1 You will be able to hold your baby for brief times during the cooling

Other things to know

- Your baby may look a little different during cooling. The skin may be pale or blotchy.
- Babies may shiver and may feel cool to the touch.
- They may seem to be asleep when still awake.
- Your baby will have tests to make sure the brain is OK.
 - An electroencephalogram (EEG) maps brain activity. Some babies may need to have their brain activity monitored for several hours.
 - A magnetic resonance image (MRI) views the brain's structure. This test is done after the treatment is finished.
- Although rare, there are risks to your baby that may occur from whole body cooling. The cold temperatures may cause your baby's:
 - heart rate to go lower than normal.
 - skin to get red, red-brown or purplish lump(s). These may appear several days after the treatment has stopped. The skin should heal after a few weeks or months.

Your baby's health care team will monitor your baby closely.