

# Measuring and treating pain in newborn babies

*'Two minutes of close observation can tell us how your baby is feeling.'*

The Woman-Mother-Child Center at Máxima MC has a children's pain working group. All nursing staff at the WMC Center are trained to spot pain as reliably as possible. In newborn babies, this is done using a special measuring instrument tailored to the age group: the 'Comfort Neo Scale'. It is of the utmost importance to us that your baby feels comfortable and experiences as little pain as possible. Please remember that crying is not always a sign of pain.

We assess your baby by looking at the following points:

|                                                                                                         |                                                                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alertness<br/>(asleep – awake – hyper-alert)</li> </ul>          |   |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Calmness<br/>(calm – anxious – panicky)</li> </ul>               |  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Crying<br/>(no crying – soft crying – intense crying)</li> </ul> |  |  |

*The information in this brochure is general in nature and is intended to give you an idea of the care and guidance you can expect. In your own situation, other advice or procedures may apply. This brochure is therefore only an addition to the specific (verbal) information from your specialist or practitioner.*

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|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Movement</b><br/>(no movement – little movement – vigorous movement)</li> </ul> |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Facial expression</b><br/>(relaxed – contorted – frowning)</li> </ul>           |  |

- The total score of the assessment tells us how comfortable your baby is feeling. The method requires your baby to be observed for a two-minute period.
- To enable us to observe your baby properly and thoroughly, we need to carefully lift his or her blanket a little (so that his or her hands are visible).
- It is also important to avoid loud noises and unexpected movements during the observation period.

However difficult this may be, we kindly ask you not to comfort or touch your baby during the two-minute observation period. We will take your baby's (comfort) score at least three times per day and report the score in his or her file.

### **If your baby is in pain or discomfort**

If it becomes apparent that your baby is in pain or discomfort, the first thing we will do is check whether we can relieve his or her pain or discomfort immediately. In some cases, a simple intervention by a parent or the nurse may be enough. If necessary, we will consult a paediatrician. We will assess whether your baby needs pain relief in the form of paracetamol. Comfort Neo Score will be assessed again shortly after we have taken the necessary action.

### **Non-pharmacological pain relief:**

Immediately before and during a painful intervention, such as taking a blood sample, we will ask you to latch and breastfeed your baby. If you are not breastfeeding your baby, we will administer a sweet sugary solution (sucrose) to the inside of your baby's cheek, followed by a pacifier if necessary.

### **Tips for ensuring your baby is as comfortable as possible:**

- Skin-to-skin contact (also referred to as kangarooing) with one of the parents. The smell of your (naked) skin and the skin contact has a comforting and pain-reducing effect. The mother's heartbeat has a stress-reducing effect.
- Latching and breastfeeding your baby has a comforting and pain-reducing effect.

- If your baby is in discomfort, it is often enough to support your baby with your hands and to restrict its movements.
- Limit the number of times your baby changes hands when you have visitors.
- Avoid loud noises (music, loud talking, shutting cupboard doors etc.)

**Any questions?**

If you have any questions about this method, the treatment options or the consequences/risks, feel free to ask any of the nursing staff at the department.

This brochure provides support and additional information on top of the verbal information provided by staff at the Woman-Mother-Child Center.