

# Retinopathy of Prematurity

## Photo Guide for Parents





**Was your baby born before 9 months?  
Help look after their eyes and vision**



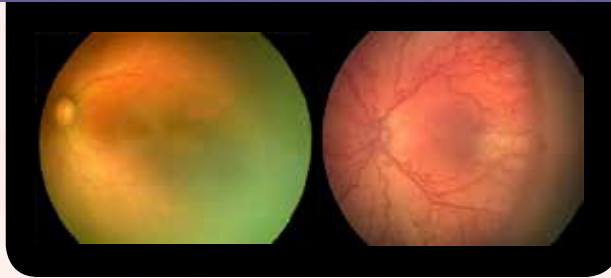


**Some babies born before 9 months can develop an eye condition called retinopathy of prematurity, or "ROP"**

**It is important that you know about this early so you know what you can do to protect your child's vision**





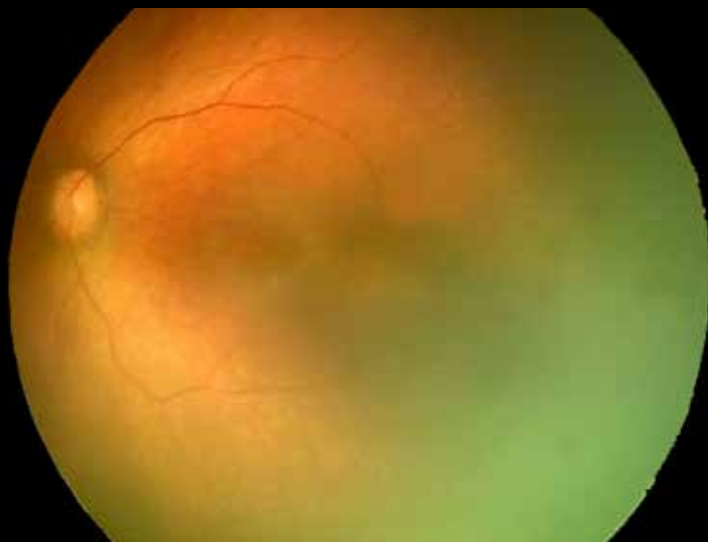


**The picture on the left is what the inside of a normal, healthy eye looks like, with nearly straight blood vessels**

**The picture on the right shows ROP, with abnormal blood vessels which grow in a haphazard way. The blood vessels can bleed or pull on the retina, leading to loss of vision**

**About 1 in 5 babies born early develop ROP - in most babies it gets better on its own without treatment**

**About 1 in 20 babies develop severe ROP and urgent treatment is needed to save their sight**



**Immature retina**



**Plus disease:** dilated and tortuous veins



**Babies are not born with ROP, as it develops a few weeks after birth.**

**Always maintain your own hygiene by bathing regularly.**

**Before touching your baby, always thoroughly wash your hands with soap and carefully dry them with a clean towel or tissue, or use an alcohol wipe.**

**Good hygiene and clean hands reduces infection which helps to prevent ROP.**







**Another way you can prevent ROP is by helping your baby to grow well by feeding them with breast milk. Premature babies can digest breast milk well.**

**Ask the nurses on the unit if you can help to feed your baby with your own milk. They will advise and assist you.**







**You can help to prevent ROP by nursing your baby by holding him or her on your chest, as in this picture. This is called kangaroo mother care (KMC).**

**If the nurses suggest that you nurse your baby like this, follow their advice. It keeps the baby warm and they feel safe and secure.**







**ROP is more likely to occur  
if baby was born very early,  
required oxygen or was sick.**





**You will not be able to see if your baby is developing ROP, as the outside of the eyes look entirely normal.**

**An eye doctor will need to look inside your baby's eyes using special equipment.**



Birth

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

**Your baby's eyes must be examined by 30 days of life**

**If your baby is still in the hospital the examination will be done in the unit**

**If your baby has already gone home, and you are told to bring him or her back to the unit for examination, it is very important that you attend on the day and time you were told. If you come back to the unit on another day, or too late, the specialist eye doctor may not be available to examine your baby's eyes**

**Or you may be told to take your baby to a certain hospital for the examination on a particular day. If this is the case, it is important to follow the instructions.**

**At the time of discharge, ask the nurse or doctor in the unit if you need to bring your baby back for an eye examination.**



*Birth*



<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>8</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>15</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>21</i>
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<i>2</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>31</i>			



**Before your baby is examined, drops will be put into their eyes to make it easier to examine the inside of the eyes.**

**The doctor will look inside the eyes using special equipment.**

**The examination only takes a few minutes. It is uncomfortable but not painful. The nurse will look after your baby while this is being done.**





**After the examination the doctor or a nurse will tell you what was seen inside your baby's eyes and what should happen next.**

**You will be told 1 of 3 things:**

**Your baby's eyes are entirely healthy and no further examination is needed**

**OR there is no ROP, or only mild ROP, and the doctor will need to examine your baby again in 1-2 weeks**

**Or, less commonly, you will be told that your baby needs treatment. If treatment is needed this MUST be done within a few days**

**It is very important that you follow the advice you are given, even if your baby is already at home. If your baby needs treatment, this will be explained to you.**









**If your baby develops ROP, whether or not it was treated, it is important that your baby is seen again by an doctor eye during the first year of life**

**This is to make sure that your baby's eyes and vision are developing normally and to give further treatment if needed**

**Follow the advice you are given about this, or ask the doctors**





**Help to look after your small baby's eyes and vision**

**Prevent ROP by performing hand hygiene before touching your baby, doing KMC and feeding your baby breast milk**

**Ensure your baby's eyes are examined for ROP by 30 days of life, and follow the advice you are given afterwards**



## Disclaimer

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Image on page 24 **Sarfaroze Bin Bashir, IAPB#EyeCareEverywhere**

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