



Glucose 6 Phosphate Dehydrogenase (G6PD) Deficiency

What is G6PD?

G6PD is an enzyme (protein) found in red blood cells. G6PD protects red blood cells from being damaged. All newborn babies are routinely screened for G6PD deficiency from the cord blood.

What is G6PD deficiency?

This means that there is too little G6PD in the red blood cells. While it is a lifelong condition, people with G6PD deficiency are healthy but exposure to certain medications, food or chemicals can cause the red blood cells to break down leading to anaemia and jaundice. Infections e.g., due to viruses or bacteria can also cause red blood cell breakdown.

What causes G6PD deficiency?

Those with G6PD deficiency are born with a change in the G6PD gene. You can discuss with the doctor about testing yourself. Do inform your obstetrician in future and the doctors treating your other children of your child's G6PD deficiency.

What does this mean for my baby?

There is a higher risk of jaundice needing treatment in babies with G6PD deficiency. Hence, your baby will need closer jaundice monitoring especially in the first two weeks of life. Severe jaundice which is not treated can cause brain injury and hearing loss.

Below is a list of some medications, food, and chemicals to avoid. This list is not exhaustive. Always check with the doctor or pharmacist before giving any medication or supplements to your child. Breastfeeding mothers should also avoid these. Caution is advised with herbal supplements, traditional medications, and alternative therapies.

MEDICATIONS

Antipyretics and Analgesics (to treat fever and pain)

Aspirin (acetylsalicylate)
Phenacetin (acetophenetidin)

Antibiotics (to treat infection)

Chloramphenicol
Nitrofurans e.g., Nitrofurantoin,
Furazolidone
Quinolones e.g., Ciprofloxacin,
Levofloxacin, Moxifloxacin, Ofloxacin,
Nalidixic acid
Sulphonamides e.g., Co-Trimoxazole
Sulphones e.g., Dapsone

Antimalarials

Chloroquine
Hydroxychloroquine
Pamaquine
Primaquine
Quinine
Tafenoquine

Others

Dimercaprol
Phenazopyridine
Phenylhydrazine
Probenecid
Rasburicase
Sulfadiazine
Sulfasalazine
Sulfonylureas e.g., glipizide

FOOD

Chinese and Malay wines
Fava beans (broad beans / kacang parang)



CHEMICALS

Henna
Methylene blue, Toluidine blue
Mothballs (naphthalene)*



TRADITIONAL MEDICINAL PREPARATIONS

Traditional Chinese Medicines containing berberine eg Rhizome Coptidis, Cortex Phellodendri

* Do not keep your child's clothing among mothballs. Those coming into contact with your child should also not keep their clothing among mothballs.

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