**How do we treat babies that have neonatal abstinence syndrome?**

* Your nurse will discuss the NAS assessment tool with you after the baby is born. This tool helps determine if a baby needs extra treatment.
* All infants can and should be comforted with dim lights, a quiet room, minimal stimulation, and other techniques such as swaddling and skin-to-skin that provide a comfortable environment.
* Breastfeeding can be a safe option with some medications—discuss your feeding plans with your baby’s care team.
* Your baby’s NAS scores will help determine if your baby will need to be treated with medication.

Rea

**Can my baby withdraw?**

**What to expect with**

**Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome**

**(NAS)**

# UNC_HealthCare_542.jpg

**What to expect after delivery:**

* Your baby may need to stay in the hospital for 3-5 days to monitor for signs of withdrawal.
* If your infant does experience withdrawal, it is likely that they will stay in the hospital longer for treatment.
* Once your infant is discharged home, you will need to see a pediatrician within 24-48 hours.
* Your baby will return to UNC for an appointment with one of the newborn nurse practitioners when the baby is 2 weeks old and again when the baby is 6 weeks old.
* Mother’s should continue to watch their infants closely for the signs of withdrawal listed in this brochure and seek care if there are concerns.

**What are symptoms of NAS?**

Not all exposed babies will withdraw. For those that do, symptoms will vary in severity depending on drug, dosage, and age of the baby at delivery. Symptoms of withdrawal may begin as early as 48-72 hours after birth or as late as 4 weeks of age. Here are some of the most common symptoms of withdrawal for full-term babies:

* Irritability (excessive crying)\*
* High-pitched crying\*
* Trembling
* Difficulty sleeping
* Tight muscle tone
* Hyperactive reflexes
* Seizures
* Yawning, stuffy nose, and sneezing
* Poor feeding and sucking
* Vomiting
* Diarrhea
* Dehydration
* Sweating
* Fever or unstable temperature

\* Most common symptoms

**How is neonatal abstinence syndrome diagnosed?**

An accurate report of the mother’s methadone use or other drug exposure is important. An NAS Assessment tool is used to help diagnose and grade the baby’s withdrawal.



NAS Assessment Tool

Using the scoring system, points are assigned for certain signs and symptoms. Your baby is scored every 4 hours. The scores assigned are based on the observations of the baby during that time period. Changes in treatment are based on 2-3 scoring periods rather than just on one. Sometimes the baby might have two good periods followed by a difficult one.

# Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS)

**What is NAS?**

NAS is a term for a group of problems a baby experiences when withdrawing from being exposed to narcotics during pregnancy.



**What causes NAS?**

Almost every drug passes from the mother’s blood stream through the placenta to the baby. Drugs that cause an addiction in the mother also cause the baby to become addicted. At birth, the baby’s need for the drug continues and they may begin to show symptoms of withdrawal. Treatment of the withdrawal symptoms may become necessary.