

## Prevention of Hypothermia in the Immediate Newborn Period Quality Improvement Action Plan

### Babies <31 Weeks Gestation

- Use warmer bag (plastic/polyethylene bag).
- Prepare resuscitaire and switch on heater.
- Heater should be increased before delivery as deemed necessary.
- Place warmer bag on resuscitaire.
- Unfold warmer bag to half its length. Folded area will provide a firm circular structure to keep the bag open when putting the baby inside.
- Ask midwife/obstetrician to clamp the umbilical cord with a plastic clamp (forceps should not be attached).
- Transfer the baby quickly but SAFELY to the resuscitaire. Loosely cover the baby WITHOUT drying him/her during the transfer to resuscitaire.
- Aim to put the newborn baby inside the bag within 30 – 40 seconds from the time of clamping the umbilical cord.
- DO NOT at any time DRY the baby's body.
- One person will need to hold the folded area of the bag firmly in place.
- A second person puts the baby inside the bag with the legs in first. Hold the baby in your forearm supporting the head whilst folding the baby's arms in the midline.
- Once inside the bag, unfold the bag and cover the baby up to the neck area.
- Now DRY the baby's head and put a hat on (appropriate size).
- DO NOT COVER the baby with towels. The radiant heat needs to get to the baby and the moisture inside the bag will help to keep the baby warm.
- ASSESS the baby's VITAL SIGNS. (It is possible to accomplish the above tasks within 50 seconds.)
- STABILISE the baby as clinically required.
- Place the servo-control temperature probe (with the right surface of the probe to the skin) from the resuscitaire on the baby's back between the scapulae. Secure this with a tape. Alternatively, hold it to the skin if the tape does not stick properly.
- A saturation probe can be attached to the baby by making a small cut/tear to the warmer bag.
- DO NOT move the baby to transport incubator until the temperature probe reads at least 36.5°C.
- Once inside the incubator in the Neonatal Unit, keep the plastic bag until the temperature is optimal (>36.5°C).
- If procedures are being carried out such as an umbilical catheterisation, leave the warmer bag until the procedures are completed and the temperature is optimal.

## **Babies 31 – 34 Weeks Gestation**

- Switch on radiant heater.
- Dry the baby (including the head) and remove the wet towel.
- Wrap with WARM towel.
- Put on a correct size hat.
- For the following babies, use servo-control temperature probe and attach it on the back between the scapula:
  - All babies <37 weeks gestation
  - SGA (Small for gestational age) babies or <200 g.
  - Unwell babies (eg respiratory distress, meconium aspiration, etc)
- If the temperature is <36.5°C, unwrap the baby AND allow the radiant heater to reach the baby.
- When the temperature is >36.5°C, wrap the baby again in a warm towel.
- In the 'high risk' babies described above, recheck the temperature at regular intervals to prevent hypothermia, especially if they are not admitted to the Neonatal Unit for further care.

## **Term Babies**

Prior to delivery:

- Ensure a warm draught free environment (ideally 25°C) prior to and following delivery.
- Position the resuscitaire away from doors and vents.
- Warm towels for the midwife to dry baby at birth.
- Warm resuscitation surface, spare towels and hat under the radiant heater.

Following delivery:

- Dry baby with warm towels.
- Facilitate early skin to skin.
- Apply a well fitting hat.
- Cover baby with a warm blanket.
- During skin to skin warm baby clothes, blankets and cot surface under radiant heater.
- After skin to skin contact dress baby in warm clothes including a hat and wrap in warm blankets.
- Lay baby on warmed cot surface and cover with warmed blankets if not being held.
- Check axilla temperature within 1 hour of birth.
- If axilla temperature is sub optimum (<36.5°C) initiate Treatment of Hypothermia protocol.
- Provide continuing staff and parental education.