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Perinatal
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National Neonatal Network Guideline

Management of Extreme Preterm Infants (22+0 to 23+6 weeks)

Document Control Sheet

Title:	Management of Extreme Preterm Infants (22+0 to 23+6 weeks)
Lead Author(s)	See Annex A
Date Published/ Issued:	
Date Effective From:	
Version/Issue Number:	1.0
Document Type:	Guideline
Document Status:	Final
Owner:	National Neonatal Network (NNN)
Approver:	NNN Guideline Oversight Group
Approval Date:	
Contact:	nss.perinatalnetwork@nhs.scot
QPulse Reference:	
File Location:	

Revision History:

Version:	Date:	Summary of Changes:	Name:	Changes Marked:
0.1	Feb 2023	None - original version		
1.0	December 2023	Final version		

Disclaimer

The recommendations in this guideline represent the view of the National Neonatal Network Guideline Development Group, arrived at after careful consideration of the evidence available. When exercising their clinical judgement, healthcare professionals are expected to take this guidance fully into account, alongside the individual needs, preferences and values of the families using their service. It is not mandatory to follow the guideline recommendations and it remains the responsibility of the healthcare professional to make decisions appropriate to the circumstances of the individual, in consultation with them and their families and carers or guardian.

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1: Network Principles Underpinning this Consensus Framework

Recommendation Allocations

- (A) Practices that should virtually always be practiced.
- (B) Evidence of benefit unclear – variation in practice likely.
- (C) Unknown efficacy and safety - items that still need evidence and may be practiced as part of extended practice from infants born more mature or part of ethically approved research.

Recommendations

- Perinatal Care for pregnancies and babies applicable to this framework will be delivered by NICU centres as described within the Best Start Model. (A)
- In-utero and/or ex-utero transfers will be to NICU centres. (A)^{2,3,5}
- NICUs must prioritise capacity for such high-risk extreme premature babies and ensure a process to mitigate against transferring out women or babies at this gestation to alternative units. (A)
- NICU centres will provide perinatal support including shared decision making to LNUs and SCUs. (A)^{1,4}
- NICUs will provide care in line with the recommendations detailed within this framework facilitating a consistency of practice across Scotland. (A)
- NICUs will participate in audit and case reviews on an annual basis to review outcomes and share learning to inform future planning of care delivery for this population of babies. (A)

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- 5 Smith, J., et al. (2014). The effects of designation and volume of neonatal care on mortality and morbidity outcomes of very preterm infants in England: A retrospective population-based cohort study. *BMJ Open*, 4, e004856. doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2014-004856.

2: Antenatal Communication and Maternal / Neonatal Transport

Recommendation Allocations

- (A) Practices that should virtually always be practiced.
- (B) Evidence of benefit unclear – variation in practice likely.
- (C) Unknown efficacy and safety - items that still need evidence and may be practiced as part of extended practice from infants born more mature or part of ethically approved research.

Recommendations

- An antenatal collaborative perinatal discussion including senior obstetric, midwifery, neonatal staff and the parents should occur where possible and include review of any known risk factors that impact on the predicted chance of survival, recognising the specific challenges of rural locations. (A)
- The possibility of loss of the baby before birth or during labour should be part of this conversation. A resulting plan for active (survival focused) or palliative (comfort focused) care should be based on these discussions. This should be supported with written information. (A) ^{2,6,7,12,13,15}
- If survival focused care is offered, parallel care planning and an anticipatory care plan may be beneficial from the start-[see section 9 guidance](#). (B)
- Parental discussions should occur locally, and in-utero transfer should be arranged if active survival focused care agreed and not available locally. Local Palliative care could be offered otherwise. (A) ^{2,13}
- Conversations should be documented and communicated to all members of the perinatal team. These should be regularly reviewed to enable the focus of care to change as gestation progresses if appropriate. (A) ²
- After full discussion with parents outlining the guarded outcomes in this group of infants, a parental wish for survival focused care should be respected, with agreement to commit to full intensive care (e.g. antenatal optimisation, IUT/postnatal transfer and expressing etc), this should be supported with written information given to parents. (A) ²
- Professional collaboration/support in delivering these conversations will be offered to LNUs and SCUs who do not routinely provide care for infants at this gestation by contacting their pathway NICU neonatologist and obstetrician. (A) ^{2,13}
- Comfort focused palliative care pathway will be supported where this is the parental wish for babies < 24 weeks with adverse prognostic indicators. (A) ^{2,9,13}
- If in-utero transfer is planned, a risk assessment utilising the [SPN risk assessment tool](#) for IUT should be undertaken which will include maternal history to guide the appropriateness, safety and timing of in-utero transfer. Transfers should only occur to allow delivery from 22 weeks gestation (A) ¹⁴

- In the event of birth in a LNU or SCU where survival focused care is planned, transfer should be offered and arranged promptly following delivery to the pathway NICU. The decision to transfer postnatally should involve parents and should involve the NICU obstetrician/neonatologist and transport team. This should be supported with written information. (A) ^{2,13}
- If a precipitate delivery occurs with no time for antenatal optimisation and discussions - it is appropriate to offer survival focused care as default while discussions are ongoing, dependent on available facilities. The ongoing direction of care; either survival focused care or comfort focused and transport decisions should be based on parental wishes, infant's condition and following extensive discussion (local team, NICU obstetrician / neonatologist, transport team). (A)
- If survival focused care is planned the pregnancy and birth should be managed with the aim of optimising perinatal condition. This includes maternal administration of a full course antenatal corticosteroids from 22+0 weeks and Magnesium Sulphate if preterm birth anticipated. Antibiotics as per RCOG guidance. (A) ^{1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15}
- Tocolysis to facilitate transfer or to allow completion of antenatal steroids should be considered and documented. (A) ^{1, 2, 4, 11}
- Caesarean birth is best avoided unless for maternal indications. (B)
- Electronic fetal monitoring is not felt to be helpful at this gestation, but intermittent monitoring of the heart is helpful to direct need for neonatal interventions. (A)
- The Scottish Perinatal Network guidance on "in-utero transfers" - covering both maternal and fetal indications and transport pathways - should be followed. (A) ¹⁴
- It is not appropriate to attempt to provide active treatment to babies born before 22+0 weeks of gestation. (A) ^{2, 13}

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3: Delivery Room, Early NNU, Golden Hours and Access

Recommendation Allocations

- (A) Practices that should virtually always be practiced.
- (B) Evidence of benefit unclear – variation in practice likely.
- (C) Unknown efficacy and safety - items that still need evidence and may be practiced as part of extended practice from infants born more mature or part of ethically approved research.

Recommendations

Preparation and Pause

- A delivery room **prompt** should be used for all preterm births to ensure the entire perinatal team is prepared and all equipment is available and checked ^{1,2,3}. (A)
- This should include:
 - **HISTORY:** A brief summary clarifying the history, indications for delivery and antenatal optimisation measures achieved
 - **EQUIPMENT:** RESUSCITAIRE, AIRWAY, THERMAL CARE, MONITORING, TRANSPORT INCUBATOR (if used)
 - **ALLOCATE ROLES:** SUPPORTING DCC, AIRWAY, THERMAL CARE, MONITORING
 - **PAUSE:** A preterm pause should be performed involving the entire perinatal team, communicating a clear plan for the birth & stabilisation. The four most vital shared goals must be highlighted:
 1. **Deferred cord clamping (DCC)**
 2. **Gentle transition**
 3. **Achieving normothermia**
 4. **Supporting early milk expression**

Any contraindications to DCC must be clearly communicated during the preterm pause, otherwise the default will be for at least 60 seconds of deferred cord clamping.

Stabilisation

DCC

- DCC of at least 60 seconds should be performed for all babies unless an absolute contraindication, or if there are no signs of life, follow local guidance ^{6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 17, 20, 22}. (A)
- The neonatal team member leading DCC should be by the bedside assessing the infant and supporting the team throughout. Aim to maintain where possible neutral airway position and gently stimulate the infant. (A)
- Timing of clamping of the cord should be directed by both the neonatal and obstetric teams. (A)
- All babies should be delivered into a plastic bag. Consider provision of additional thermal care during DCC if feasible. Use plastic cord clamps, avoiding large metal theatre instruments being in contact with the infant (B)

Airway

- Resuscitation should be performed as per NLS guidance & with consideration of maturity and condition. (A) ¹⁵
- Stabilisation and airway management should be led by a clinician with extensive resuscitation experience – either a senior middle grade or consultant. (A) ^{10, 11}
- Aim to support a gentle transition with facemask PEEP of 6-8 cm H₂O in 30% oxygen initially, followed by IPPV 25cm H₂O if required, or intubate immediately if clinically indicated^{11,13, 14, 15, 19, 20, 22, .} (A)
- Intubation should be performed by a senior **experienced intubator** with a size 2 or 2.5mm ETT, likely length 5.5-6 cm max (A). Both 00 and 000 Laryngoscope blades should be available. (A)
- After clinical confirmation of intubation, give surfactant without delay. (A)
- ET fixation should be undertaken as per unit policy. Consideration to be given on practicalities due to size and extreme preterm skin. (A)
- Use minimal inflation pressures to achieve saturation targets and adequate heart rate and convert the infant to volume targeted ventilation as soon as possible^{19, 22}. (A)

Thermoregulation on resuscitaire ^{3, 10, 11, 20, 22}

- Ensure the infant remains in the plastic bag throughout stabilisation (A) and directly under radiant heat.
- Attach a temperature probe and monitor temperature closely throughout stabilisation (this is ideal and should occur in NICUs, it is accepted that LNU/SCBUs may not be able to achieve this). (A)
- Ensure strict thermoregulatory measures are adhered to. (A)

Monitoring

- Attach pre-ductal saturation monitoring to right hand (A) ¹⁵
- If good cardiac trace via saturation probe, ECG leads are not essential (A)

Family Delivery Room Contact

- If an infant is clinically stable and normothermic following stabilisation measures, a brief cuddle or contact with parents prior to transfer to NICU should be prioritised and offered. (B)

Advanced Resuscitation

Although evidence is lacking, performing CPR and using resuscitation drugs in this population of babies is unlikely to be effective both in the short-term acute outcome or improve longer term outcomes and would generally not be appropriate in this group of extremely premature infants.

If the infant is felt to be too small, immature, or too clinically unwell, it is reasonable not to undertake resuscitative measures in the best interests of the infant. Joint discussions with the clinical team and parents should help guide these decisions.

- If offering advanced resuscitative techniques, they should be performed as per NLS guidance ¹⁵. (A)
- If the infant remains bradycardic despite effective lung inflation, intubation & surfactant, a formal assessment at 10 minutes of age should be performed, and a discussion with

parents should be had with around the appropriateness of ongoing resuscitative efforts and instead ensuring comfort for baby and family. (A)

- In the absence of signs of life by 20 minutes, discontinuing resuscitation would be regarded as acceptable. (A)

Neonatal Unit

Preparation

- Ensure the neonatal unit is set up to facilitate efficient stabilisation. (A)
- All equipment should be prepared including an incubator, ventilator, humidifier, monitoring, naso/oro-gastric tube, line trolley, parenteral nutrition, lipid and drugs (A).

Admission Pause

- Perform a brief pause on admission to make a systematic plan for the infant, and to allocate tasks and responsibilities.
- Clarify shared goals including rapid access, early administration of drugs and fluids & avoidance of hypocarbia.
- Ensure procedures are carried out by **skilled practitioners** to **minimise handling** and avoid **secondary hypothermia** (Avoid removing babies from their delivery room plastic bag until all procedures are undertaken).

Lines

- Aim to site umbilical arterial and venous lines as soon as possible. If any potential delay or difficulties, a peripheral cannula (PVC) can be inserted initially²⁰. (A)
- If born in LNU/SCBU, umbilical line insertion should not be prolonged or delay transfer, a PVC is acceptable. (A)
- To avoid chemical burns, carefully ensure the correct cleaning solution is used on preterm skin, avoid alcohol and use lower concentration chlorhexidine solutions, as per local guidance. (A)
- Lines should be well secured as per local guidance and avoiding contact with skin. Particular care should be taken securing lines in babies requiring transfer. (A)

Bloods

- Routine bloods should be taken as soon as possible including full blood count, group & save, gas, blood spot +/- blood cultures & CRP if indicated. Consider obtaining from the placenta or cord following delivery to minimise blood losses (A)
- Coagulation screens should only be performed if concerns about bleeding/DIC from sepsis, or if very significant bruising. (A)

Fluids

- Commence parenteral nutrition and lipids as soon as possible after birth^{1,18}. (A)
- Close attention should be made to regularly assess the fluid status of the infant, who will likely need rapid escalation of fluid volumes. (A)

Drugs

- CAFFEINE: Prescribed as per local drug monograph^{19,22}. (A)
- ANTIBIOTICS: If indicated and as per local unit policy. (A)
- ANTIFUNGAL PROPHYLAXIS: follow local policy. (A)

- VITAMIN K (A)
- STEROIDS: Consider early prophylactic hydrocortisone, especially if no antenatal steroid given, or if there is a history of chorioamnionitis^{4,5}. (B)

Cranial Ultrasound

- A cranial ultrasound should be performed within the first 24 hours¹⁶. (A)
- Perform early if anaemia or clinical concern.
- Time scan to minimise handling & avoid early hypothermia.
- If born in an LNU or SCBU, ensure cranial scans do not delay transfer, however perform earlier if there are questions around the appropriateness of transfer or ongoing intensive care. (A)

Breast Milk

- Ensure mother is supported to express in the first two hours after birth (A)
- Give colostrum as soon as possible for mouth care and trophic feeds^{7,10,11,13}. (A)
- Use standardised feeding protocols to guide feeding plan^{2,7,8,10,11,13,21,22}. (A)

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4: Respiratory Management

Recommendation Allocations

- (A) Practices that should virtually always be practiced.
- (B) Evidence of benefit unclear – variation in practice likely.
- (C) Unknown efficacy and safety - items that still need evidence and may be practiced as part of extended practice from infants born more mature or part of ethically approved research.

Recommendations

Ventilation

- Minimise dead space – shortened ET tube, no ETCO₂ as standard care (A)
- Mode of ventilation
 - volume targeted, start at 5ml/kg if on conventional ventilation. (A)
 - minimise ventilation while avoiding atelectasis^{6,10,17}. (A)
 - consider HFOV – as first line or as rescue (B)^{3,10,12}
- Avoid hypocarbia-adjust ventilation rapidly and repeat gas within the hour^{10,11,15}. (A)
- Allow permissive hypercarbia^{6,10,11,13}. (A)
- Minimise sedation (B), avoid midazolam. (B)
- Avoid muscle relaxation (A). If felt unavoidable, try bolus dose(s) rather than infusion. (A)
- Minimise suction, avoid routine suction. (A)

Extubation

- Avoid extubation in first 72 hours (highest risk of IVH). (A)
- Reasonable to avoid extubation in first weeks unless local NICU has good track record extubating babies <600g (unsuccessful extubations increase mortality and respiratory morbidity)^{4,8}. (B)
- Extubate to non-invasive respiratory support – likely NIPPV^{7,12,14,16}. (B)
- NAVA or nHFOV if available are other options and may be superior^{12,14}. (C)
- Orogastric tubes are preferable to nasogastric tubes until stable off ventilator. (A)
- Extubation attempts need to be carefully planned, risks of multiple intubations and extubations need to be balanced with risks of prolonged ventilation^{4,8}. (A)
- Consider using HFNC during intubation/reintubation attempts⁵. (B)

Steroids

- Routine use of postnatal corticosteroids is not recommended. (A)
- However, steroids either to prevent or treat early BPD, may increase the rate of survival without severe BPD but carry significant short- and long-term risks (B)^{1,2,10,17}
- Treatment options need to be decided on a unit level and often individualised per patient with discussion with family.
 - Prophylactic
 - Consider early prophylactic hydrocortisone (B) especially if chorioamnionitis^{1,2}
 - Treatment of evolving BPD
 - Consider low dose dexamethasone (DART)^{10,17}

- if possible not before day 14.
- If ventilatory requirements are modest but the infant is not big enough in size or with good enough respiratory drive to extubate, consider delaying dexamethasone. (B)
- If no response after 72 hours consider stopping.
- May need more than one course of DART.
- Consider higher doses of dexamethasone if does not respond to DART (B)
- Consider nebulised budesonide to avoid re-ventilation. (B)
- Keep account of cumulative steroid dose (A) – total dose and duration should be minimised.

Diuretics

A trial of diuretics may be considered if evolving lung disease or PDA. If no improvement after a few days, stop. Watch carefully for AKI especially with furosemide¹⁰ (B)

Non-invasive Respiratory Support

- Ensure rolling programme of nursing education on mask/prongs placement. (A)
- Observe for nasal trauma. (A)
- Wean support slowly guided by work of breathing and FiO₂. (A)
- Step down of support NIPPV – CPAP – high flow^{1, 5, 7, 14, 16}. (A)
- Consider higher flow rates on HFNC (8-12 l/min) when needed post term. (B)
- Optimise nutrition, see section below⁶. (A)
- Consider inhaled or enteral steroids if destabilising on non-invasive support and heading towards ventilation or slow to wean.¹⁷ (B)
- Consider assessing for Pulmonary Hypertension in severe BPD.⁵ (B)

Longer Term

- Offer RSV prophylaxis to infants with BPD.⁹ (A)
- Parents should be:
 - Advised that the infant is at risk of respiratory deteriorations/admissions with respiratory viruses. (A)
 - Advised to avoid exposure to cigarette smoke, vaping, viruses or other respiratory infections. (A)
 - Encourage vaccinations including flu/pertussis. (A)
 - Considering encourage healthy diet and exercise long term. (B)

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5: Cardiovascular and Haemodynamics

Recommendation Allocations

- (A) Practices that should virtually always be practiced.
- (B) Evidence of benefit unclear – variation in practice likely.
- (C) Unknown efficacy and safety - items that still need evidence and may be practiced as part of extended practice from infants born more mature or part of ethically approved research.

Aims

To use an approach to haemodynamic monitoring and support to reduce the incidence of serious and common adverse outcomes in infants born at 22-23 week gestation. These including death, pulmonary haemorrhage, brain injury, NEC and chronic respiratory failure.

Evidence: incorporated into the main document and referenced.

Useful Additional Resources

Appendix 1: provides normative blood pressure values, details of inotropes, hypotension flow charts in response to echo and multiparameter monitoring and suggested bedside algorithm for NIRS.

Recommendations

Perinatal Optimisation and Delivery Room Care (A)

- Optimal perinatal and delivery room care, with delayed cord clamping and transition are key to early cardiovascular stability³³.

Admission to NICU General Care

- Umbilical arterial line and venous line placement wherever possible. These can be left in place for 7-10 days and are critical to fluid/nutritional support of these infants (A)
- Goal posting of umbilical lines, attaching them to the abdomen by placing Duoderm on the abdominal skin and goal posting tape to this, should be undertaken as standard at approximately 72 hours i.e. before the umbilical separates avoiding line displacement. (A)
- Avoid any sustained hypocalcaemia < 2 mmol/l (corrected) or < 1 (ionised) (B)
- Avoid very rapid fluid boluses where possible (A)
- Consider checking clotting screen if the infant is very badly bruised or at clinical risk of severe clotting impairment putting them at further risk of IVH **OR** if hypotensive use FFP or cryoprecipitate as volume (B)
- Haemoglobin: consider lower early target of between 12g – 14g /dl for 1st 72 hours¹¹ (B)

Specific Haemodynamic Care (B)

- Fundamentally based on clinical assessment, gases and multiparameter monitoring.
- If hypotensive consider findings and likely pathophysiology in context of integrated flow Chart 1
- Also consider echocardiographic assessment and cerebral NIRS to provide a fuller understanding of pathophysiology, brain oxygenation, appropriate treatments and responses. (B)

Monitoring

- **Arterial Blood Pressure (BP) monitoring (A)** via UAC is standard part of care. Where not possible, placement of peripheral arterial lines will depend on the size and stability of the infant. (A)
 - BP should be considered along with clinical phenotype (see Appendix Chart 1)
 - There is limited normative BP data for 22 and 23 weeks GA but reference charts are available ([Appendix 1: Tables 1 &2](#)).
 - Extrapolation of mean BP down from data at 24 weeks, suggests lower mean BP thresholds should generally be $> GA + 2\text{mmHg}$. (A)
 - All early BP should be interpreted with caution as early BP is poorly concordant with flow and end organ perfusion, particularly in the first 24 hours when low flow states are common and the brain is most vulnerable to IVH^{19,32}. (A)
 - Responses should never be made in isolation from other measures of perfusion: including Lactate, Hb, urine output, capillary refill (CRF) time and where in use cerebral NIRS. (A)
 - Low BP is a common scenario and, after a single fluid bolus, dobutamine up to maximum 10microg/kg/min is generally a good approach. (B)
 - Consideration should always be given to other non-cardiac pathophysiology such as over ventilation or pneumothorax. (A)
 - Consideration should be given to both **systemic and diastolic** components as indicators of cause of hypotension or compromise when considering response beyond a single slow bolus of fluid ([Appendix 1 Table 3 and Appendix 2 Chart 1](#)). (A)
 - "Inotropes" should be selected based on characteristics (vasotropes, chronotropes, inotropes, lusitropes) and underlying pathophysiology ([Appendix 1 Table 4 & Appendix 2 Chart 1](#)).
 - Consider hydrocortisone particularly if more than one inotropic agent is required. (A)
 - If additional support for low BP is required, consider low dose adrenaline (particularly if LV / RV dysfunction) or noradrenaline for septic shock with tachycardia. (B)
 - Dopamine has a limited role, should be avoided in pulmonary hypertension and should only be used in cautiously with dobutamine as may lead to excessive tachycardia. If second line agents for hypotension are required adrenaline or noradrenaline maybe more appropriate. (B)
 - Infants with LV dysfunction may require sedation, particularly if high BP or high systemic vascular resistance. (B)
- **ECG:** typically best avoided for at 1st 72 hours for skin integrity issues. (A)

- **Cerebral NIRS monitoring (B)**

This is an area of growing practice; use is evolving but not routine. Pilot trials have demonstrated the ability to reduce cerebral hypoxia (4) but a large pragmatic RCT did not show a reduction in cranial ultrasound changes or death if used in the first 72 hours of life¹⁴. However secondary outcomes exploring unintended adverse effects and skin damage were reassuring¹⁴.

Consider commencing where skin integrity and experience with more mature infants allows to guide intervention/ support.(B)

- Consider monitoring cerebral saturations (NIRS) where possible from birth for at least the first 72 hours of life and/or during periods of haemodynamic instability.³²
- Cerebral NIRS can be helpful in the absence of arterial BP monitoring.
- NIRS hypoxic thresholds must be selected for the specific manufacturer's device and probe ([Appendix 1: Table 5](#)).
- Responses to hypoxic thresholds should include utilisation of bedside clinical algorithms of evidence based interventions ([Appendix 2: Chart 1](#)).
- Units using NIRS should audit carefully and in collaboration with other centres.

- **Echocardiographic assessment (B)**

During the transitional phase from fetal to neonatal circulation, pulmonary vascular resistance decreases rapidly, followed by the increased systemic vascular resistance due to the separation from the placenta. Extremely preterm infants have greater difficulty adapting to these changes. Preterm infants born at 22-24 weeks of gestation have fewer myocardial muscle fibres (30%) with poor myocardial contractility and responses to catecholamines. In addition, a PDA superimposes and exacerbates unstable hemodynamic conditions³¹. Publications from North America, Japan^{15,16,31} and Europe⁹ describe neonatal functional echocardiography as part of a range of interventions associated with excellent outcomes^{15,16,31} at 22-25 weeks or improved outcomes generally in preterms²⁷. Whilst outcomes may represent other aspects of care, or population findings, more recently there are improvements associated with the introduction of echo assessment²⁹. Echo can also guide appropriate care during periods of acute destabilisation and has an important role in monitoring for later development of pulmonary hypertension.

Echo must be carried out with care and attention to infection control principles. (B)

- Units that can provide routine echo assessment should consider echo based circulatory management as an additional key component of care.
- Echocardiographic haemodynamic assessment, where skills are available, should be considered in the first 12-36 hours of life or for infants requiring more than one inotrope, clinical suspicion of a PDA or any acutely deteriorating infant.
- There is no one size fits all solution to haemodynamic instability which is disease and physiology dependant; thoughtful use of Charts 1-3 ([Appendix 2](#)), integrating clinical background and other aspects of multi modal monitoring are required.
- Structured recording of assessments and interventions along with peer review are vital to improving care and outcomes.

Specific Interventions

1. Early prophylactic indomethacin (C)

Indomethacin is highly effective in PDA closure and reducing pulmonary haemorrhage^{17,24}. Additionally, indomethacin has independent effects on capillary stability and cerebral flow, resulting in reductions in major IVH if used prophylactically²⁴. The same effects are not apparent with ibuprofen and paracetamol. Two-year outcome studies and Cochrane review did not show benefits in development or survival compared with routine open label use to manage PDA in RCTs¹⁰ but more recent cohort studies demonstrate reductions in early hypotension and BPD with prophylactic use compared to later PDA treatment^{21,22}. The American Academy of paediatrics recommend against routine prophylactic administration to reduce major IVH. However, the risk benefit of giving at 12 hours, in very high-risk infants with no cardiovascular contraindication on echo assessment, is still debated²⁸. Effects in reducing IVH can be obtained with a single dose⁵ and prophylactic indomethacin remains in use in North America and Japan at very low gestations. In two recent publications of parental health related preferences parents were interviewed and listed reduction in major IVH as their main priority. When presented with options on indomethacin, ibuprofen, paracetamol from prophylaxis compared with watch and see options early indomethacin was the preferred option^{1,25}.

Indomethacin is not in routine use in Scotland or UK.

- **Not for current adoption**
- Could be reviewed in future based ongoing audit and review of outcomes.

2. A. Medical management of PDA (B)

Assessment of clinical trial data alone would justify either treatment or watch and wait approaches.

Cochrane reviews of PDA management²⁶, and recent clinical trials, show no evidence of long-term benefit from PDA treatment^{7,13,30}. The challenges of clinical trials have been considerable and maybe affected by clinician bias²³, PDA assessment, treatment efficacy and contamination of control arms leaving little difference in actual PDA exposure. Many clinicians chose not to treat whilst others have adopted a more individual pathophysiology-based approach to treatment accepting short term benefits on inotropes, pulmonary haemorrhage and lung compliance^{7,17,21,22}. Untreated, a moderate or large PDA, is likely to remain open for several months and will have a protracted physiological effect on the circulation. There is secondary analysis evidence that prolonged exposure in ventilated babies is associated with increased incidence of severe BPD^{6,8} and there are concerns about potential impact on brain growth²⁰. Centres with considerable experience in managing 22-23 week infants report excellent outcomes and include hemodynamic assessment and early closure of moderate to large PDA as an important part of their treatment strategies^{15,16,27,31}. There is some longitudinal evidence to support this but there are also likely to be other population or practice factors and managing PDA is only a part of haemodynamic management.

Where medical treatment is practised the following should be considered.

Medical treatment, if considered, is optimal in the first 2 weeks.

- Early 18 -72 hours (B) (Appendix 2 chart 3)

- Consider haemodynamic assessment and management of moderate/ large PDAs^{3,15,16,17,21,22,27}.
- Avoid extubation in the presence of a very large PDA in the first week.
- Ibuprofen is usually the drug of choice and can be used safely with low dose (Premiloc) hydrocortisone beyond 24 hours of life.⁴ Paracetamol probably has little efficacy in this GA group but is an option and can be used when ibuprofen is contraindicated, can be used with ibuprofen in refractory cases or as a trial of response whilst establishing some enteral feeds and assessing the ongoing need to close a PDA in the first 72 hours of life.²²
- Late 72 hrs - 10 days (B)
 - Consider medical closure of moderate to large PDA in infants approaching end of the 1st week to reduce challenges of later closure, optimise brain growth and severe grades of BPD (if ventilated).^{1,5,10,13,25}
- Watch and wait (B). The PDA may close spontaneously but at this gestation is likely to remain open for several months.

B. Interventional closure of PDA

- Persistent PDA should have a full cardiology review and be considered for closure as per guideline PDA ligation guideline (<https://www.perinatalnetwork.scot>).
- Device closure by interventional catheterisation is limited to babies >6kg in Scotland (although this is currently under review).

3. Management of hypotension or poor perfusion states (B)

- Consider referring to NIRS algorithm (for cerebral saturations below threshold), echo and hypotension flow charts ([Appendix 2 Charts 1-4](#)).

Management of acute pulmonary hypertension (PPHN) and right ventricle dysfunction (A),

There is no evidence of benefit to routine use of inhaled Nitric Oxide (iNO) in preterm infants to prevent lung diseases³. There are concerns it may cause intracranial haemorrhage and pulmonary haemorrhage. There is some limited evidence for the use of iNO in specific groups of preterm infants including those born following preterm prolonged rupture of membranes and those with echocardiographic criteria of PPHN physiology¹⁸.

- Use when severe pulmonary hypertension and right ventricular dysfunction (not left ventricle physiology); ideally after echocardiography assessment but also in the context of pulmonary hypoplasia and respiratory failure.
- Consider starting at low doses of 5ppm and titrate against response.
- Review frequently as pulmonary pressures ductal physiology can change rapidly.
- Avoid dopamine in management of PPHN – inotrope support will depend on pathophysiology, but low dose adrenaline is generally preferred.
- Follow hypotension flow charts if associated hypotension.

Screening for Late Pulmonary Hypertension (A)

Pulmonary hypertension can develop in association with BPD and has a poor outcome.

- Consider formal echo review if worsening respiratory condition. An echo should be performed at 36 weeks corrected and prior to discharge if not undertaken earlier ².
- Management of pulmonary hypertension should generally be supportive. However, if severe/ persistent consider prompt specialist respiratory and cardiology review.

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6: Fluids and Nutrition

Recommendation Allocations

- (A) Practices that should virtually always be practiced.
- (B) Evidence of benefit unclear – variation in practice likely.
- (C) Unknown efficacy and safety - items that still need evidence and may be practiced as part of extended practice from infants born more mature or part of ethically approved research.

Recommendations

Fluids/Nutrition Management ^{4,17}

- Fluids should start at 120-140 ml/kg/day, (Likely IWL of 60-100ml/kg/day). (A) ^{2,14}
- Urine output and fluid balance should be monitored at least 6 hourly, with fluid balance aims set on ward round. (A)
- Weigh infant daily, aiming for 7-10% weight loss in the first few days; liberalize fluid allowance when weight loss >5%. (B)
- Fluid requirements may rise very rapidly and may exceed 200ml/kg/day in the early days after birth.
- Total energy should at least cover resting energy expenditure 40-60kcal/kg/day, increase to at least 75kcal/kg/day by day 3, and aim at 90-120kcal/kg/day later in anabolic phase. (A) ^{4,17}
- Amino acids should start at 1.5-2g/kg/day and increase to 2.5-4 g/kg/day by day 3. (A) ^{4,5,8,15,17}
- Consider decreasing amino acids if Urea > 10 mmol/l (B)
- Lipid Should start at 2 g/kg/day and increase to 3.5 g/kg/day by day 3, weaning back as per local protocol as enteral feeds are tolerated. (A) ^{4,17}
- As a minimum triglyceride should be checked 72 hours after starting lipid, then 48 hours after maximum dose lipid infusion, then weekly if in the normal range. IV lipids should be provided in a quantity not to exceed serum triglyceride level of 3 mmol/l.
- Infants should start on sodium free bag PN running at a maximum of 83 ml/kg/day asap after birth and transition to sodium containing bag when >48 hours or when sodium falls below 145 mmol/l or when weight loss >5%. Sodium from other drugs and infusions should also be kept to a minimum where possible. Arterial line continuous infusion fluid should be of 0.45% sodium chloride/heparin solutions. (A) ^{4,11,14,17}
- Carbohydrates should start 4-8 mg/kg/min (5.8-11.5 g/Kg/day) and increase to 8-10 mg/kg/min (11.5-12.7 g/Kg/day) by day 3. (B) ^{4,17}
- Consider decreasing carbohydrates if significant hyperglycaemia by reducing total PN and replacing with a lower sugar load or reducing PN glucose concentration and or beginning insulin. Consider how this affects amino acids and electrolytes and aim to keep in the normal range. (A) ^{12,13,19} Significant hyperglycaemia cut-offs:

- Any Blood Glucose measurement of ≥ 20 mmol/L
- Persistent Blood Glucose values of ≥ 15 mmol/L
- Persistent Blood Glucose values of > 12 mmol/L with glycosuria $\geq 3+$ on urinary dipstick testing
- Potassium up to 2 mmol/kg/day may be tolerated and even desirable from the beginning, but serum levels need to be monitored as individual differences are significant due to catabolism/anabolism, urine output, and intracellular/extracellular shifts. (A)
- Avoid hyperchloraemia from fluids, infusions and fluid boluses. Aim to keep chloride less than or equal to the sum of Sodium and Potassium ions combined. Consider replacing chloride anions with acetate in PN and/or utilize phosphate to deliver sodium or potassium without increasing chloride load. (A)
- Start Phosphate at ≥ 0.5 mmol/kg/day and increase to 2 mmol/kg/day by day 4, monitor bone profile and aim to keep in the normal range adding additional phosphate if required. (A) ^{4,17}
- Combined solution such as SMOF lipid with vitamins may be used with dose of vitamins varying with the lipid intake. (A) ^{4,17}
- Ideally individual nutrition should be available in institutions looking after extreme preterm babies as altering intake of different components independently is often required, e.g. decreasing carbohydrates while increasing amino acids and maintaining delivery of Calcium, Phosphate or electrolytes is optimal. (A) Individual nutrition is ideally provided by an aseptic pharmacy daily (A) or with breaks in service not exceeding 48 hours.
- Nutrition is ideally prescribed prospectively according to recommendations and individual circumstances including all components. Nutrition should be documented in a form that facilitates audit. NICUs should have access to a dietician who will monitor growth measurements and advise on optimal nutrition to meet recommendations. (A) ¹⁰

Feeds

- Start feeds on day 1 (trophic feeds). (A) ^{1,6,8,9,10,15}
- 1-2 hourly feeds (3). (B) ⁶
- Use probiotics. (B) ^{6,10,18}
- Promote expressing and using of fresh milk. (A) ^{1,9,10,16}
- If there is any shortfall of maternal expressed breast milk, after 24-48 hours, it is recommended that donor expressed milk is used to make up any shortfall, rather than formula, where parents consent. ^{1,9,18}
- Use local guidance for advancing enteral feed volumes, managing possible intolerance and fortification schedule. (A) ^{9,10,16}
- Use an individual feeding plan with increments of 18-30 ml/kg/d. (A) ^{1,3,4,19}
- Fortify expressed breast milk after 150 ml/kg/day tolerated. (B)

Other

- Record all blood sampling volumes, flushes, and drugs in fluid balance. (B) ⁵
- Blood sampling stewardship-strict sampling volumes, blood sampling plans (how often) to be documented on twice daily ward rounds, aim to rely on near patient results if they are within normal range. ⁵
- Consultant lead blood sampling stewardship aiming to undertake minimum blood sampling (Unless there is specific clinical concern or parameters that are abnormal there is no specific reason to take more bloods unless discussed with attending consultant). (A) ⁵ Suggested minimum sampling:
 - At birth (could be obtained from the cord):
 - FBC, Group and DAT, gas
 - Coagulation is not standard unless concerns about bleeding/DIC from sepsis
 - There after:
 - Blood gas frequency as recommended by attending consultant
 - Observe Hb and electrolytes daily on gas if in normal range while on PN
 - Jaundice monitoring will require lab samples until falling spontaneously.
 - Lab U&E's, LFT's, Bone profile, FBC weekly otherwise
 - Triglycerides as above
- Avoid pharmacologic treatment of reflux. (A) ¹⁶
- Minimize antibiotic exposure, using antibiotic stewardship. (A) ¹⁶
- Consider using 0.45% Sodium Chloride/heparin arterial and line flushes NaCl 0.9%. (B)

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7: Infection Prevention and Skin Care

Recommendation Allocations

- (A) Practices that should virtually always be practiced.
- (B) Evidence of benefit unclear – variation in practice likely.
- (C) Unknown efficacy and safety - items that still need evidence and may be practiced as part of extended practice from infants born more mature or part of ethically approved research.

Recommendations

Reducing Healthcare Associated Infection

- In the delivery room -care should be taken to ensure team members hands are clean¹². (A)
- If screening the infant for infection at birth, consider taking septic screen from umbilical cord or freshly placed umbilical line to avoid unnecessary skin breaks. (A)
- After a caesarean birth where indication was maternal only (no infection risk factors), a septic screen and antibiotics is not considered standard^{9,15}. (A)
- Antibiotics should be reviewed around 36 hours after starting and consideration of discontinuing the course where infection is felt to be clinically unlikely, backed up by inflammatory markers^{1,7,14,15}. (A)
- Strict Hand washing policies should be followed - Hands and forearms: Bare Below the Elbow (BBE)^{13,14} (A):
- Education on gentle handling should be offered to parents while supporting the positive influences of parental touch and presence¹⁰. (A)
- Avoid entering incubator unless clear reason – minimal, gentle handling should be maintained where possible. (A)
- Local/national central line insertion checklist and maintenance bundle guidance should be followed^{1,3,7}. (A)
- All invasive procedures should be done using Aseptic Non Touch Technique; ideally all staff (medical and nursing) dealing with these lines should have done the NES module on this and undertaken local observed practice¹¹. (A/B)

Skin Care

- Minimise medical device/adhesive or solution related skin trauma (A):
 - Where possible avoid peripheral lines while UVC in situ, where used careful consideration of tape selection should be undertaken.⁸
 - Use the smallest piece of tape/dressing to achieve desired goal^{2,10,11}
 - Don't use ECG probes or tape on hands as standard
 - If using skin temperature probes, lay the flat surface of the temperature probe against the skin and cover with smallest size of silicone or hydrocolloid dressing

- Avoid direct contact with new-born skin with any adhesive probes. (e.g. "double backed" tape or deactivate adhesive with cotton balls when full adhesion not required e.g. when using pulse oximetry)
- If using hydrogel, silicone or hydrocolloid dressings as cushioning beneath equipment, they should be left in place for a minimum of 24 hours when their natural adhesiveness begins to diminish and they are then more easily removed; note when using dressing, you will not be able to assess the skin under the dressing.¹¹
- Avoid bandaging or using plasters on area post heel pricks/venepuncture. Use pressure with a cotton ball or gauze to halt bleeding
- When removing adhesives:
 - Avoid using solvents (e.g. alcohol) to weaken adhesive due to potential toxicity
 - Slowly fold adhesive back onto itself while moistening the adhesive-skin surface with warm water or a silicone-based alcohol-free adhesive remover e.g. Apheel, Peel-Easy, mineral oil or petrolatum-based emollients; select the best remover and removal technique for the type of adhesive
 - If using transparent dressings, stretch to release adherence, then peel back horizontally - avoid friction to avoid skin trauma.
 - Follow local unit skin aseptic product guidance and wipe off strategy (A) ¹¹
- Use a Nursing Skin Care Package (A) ^{5,11}:
 - Identify risks for skin breakdown:
 - Extreme prematurity.
 - Medical devices/probes/lines.
 - Sedating/muscle relaxing medication.
 - Medical conditions.
 - Assessment/report on skin integrity.
 - Inspect skin on front and back and undertake a skin injury risk assessment on admission and at the first opportunity when beginning a shift e.g. with first set of 'cares' and with changes in skin condition.
 - Report skin quality, assessment, interventions and outcomes at handover and during the shift if problems arise.
 - Care procedures to promote and protect skin for injury
 - Avoid pressure/probes damaging skin.
 - Change saturation probe/TCM probe site 4 hourly as tolerated, in first few days.
 - Nappies should be left loose or unfastened. If skin breaking down on bottom leave nappy open to air or apply orabase/petrolatum based mixture.
 - Nasal septum observation on NCPAP – rotate between mask and prongs to change pressure areas 4-6 hourly or more frequently if skin breakdown is present. Assess for pressure damage with every mask and prong rotation.
 - Assess pressure areas e.g. occiput and ears, under NCPAP hat once per shift

- Protect skin and bony prominences with low adhesive sheeting (e.g. Parafricta), and or gel filled mattress. Limit number of layers between the infant and sheets
- Change the infant's position using sheeting to relieve pressure and avoid friction and shear injury.
- Use special mattresses-airbed/silk sheets. Use of Fluidised positioner to maintain the infant in midline position. E.g. <https://parafricta.com/neonatal-sheet-by-parafricta-40-p.asp>
- Avoid routine use of topical emollients⁶. If used coconut oil is recommended⁵.
- Separate bottles for emollients if using same product for perineal protection.
- Incubator humidity should be 80-90% as per local policy and weaning protocol in place as per local guidance.
- On admission undertake scoring/documentation for skin
 - In Badgernet EPR go to: Obs/monitoring → Nursing obs → Skin
 - If using paper documentation consider:
 - Northampton Neonatal Skin Assessment tool
 - Skin Injury Risk Assessment Record (SIRA)
 - Neonatal Skin Risk Assessment (NSRA) tool
 - Neonatal Tissue Viability Assessment Tool
- Frequency of ongoing skin assessment depends on the condition of the infant.
- Various skin ongoing assessment tools exist; document assessment in relevant part of the infant's record. Consider:
 - In Badgernet EPR go to: Obs/monitoring → Nursing obs → Formal Skin Assessment 1
 - If using paper documentation consider:
 - Neonatal Skin Condition Score (NSCS)
 - Braden Q Scale
 - Glamorgan Scale
 - Neonatal Skin Risk Assessment and Management Tool (SRAMT)
- Treatment suggestions following skin breakdown- various common issues: (see Appendix 3 and 4)
 - To treat damaged skin – select products that are advocated by the local tissue viability team and formulary
 - Cover superficial wounds and abrasions with low adherence wound contact dressing (e.g. Mepitel, Lomatuell pro) or hydrocolloid (e.g. DuoDerm Extra Thin) wound care products.
 - Cover low or high exudate wounds with hydrogel (e.g. Purilon) then vapour permeable dressing (e.g. Tegaderm) or hydrocolloid or silicone dressing.
 - Cover clean granulating wounds with low to high exudate with hydrocolloid (e.g. DuoDerm Extra Thin) or low adherence wound contact dressing (e.g. Mepitel, Kliniderm foam silicone lite).

- Cover epithelialising wounds that have no to low exudate with hydrocolloid (DuoDerm Extra Thin) or vapour permeable dressing (Tegaderm).
 - Cover extravasation injuries and extensive wounds with medical grade honey, covered with honey infused hydrocolloid dressing or petrolatum impregnated gauze and then a low adherent dressing (Mepitel).
- As prophylaxis or treatment for infected skin:
 - Consider using anti-fungal prophylaxis as prescribed.
 - Necrotising fasciitis is a particular problem (presenting as pressure sores with overlying black eschars or rash with florid white exudate) and may be caused by aspergillosis-have a low index for escalating fungal treatment to treatment doses from prophylactic.
 - Use IV antibiotic for gram positive organisms as prescribed
- From birth and during antibiotic courses with broad spectrum antibiotics follow local/national fungal prophylaxis guidance -If using fluconazole prophylaxis consider topical antifungal in addition. (A)
- Escalation of antifungal treatment if significant deterioration with skin lesions. (A)
- Staff Education (A/B):
 - Skin Care Education package;
 - Study days;
 - Skin Integrity Team/Champions.

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8: Neuro-Critical

Recommendation allocations

- (A) Practices that should virtually always be practiced.
- (B) Evidence of benefit unclear – variation in practice likely.
- (C) Unknown efficacy and safety - items that still need evidence and may be practiced as part of extended practice from infants born more mature or part of ethically approved research.

Recommendations

- Maintain head in midline 15-20 degrees up, supine position for 72 hours. Avoid head in side position with 90 degrees tilt, avoid prone position unless clinically indicated by consultant in charge with use of positioner^{1,6,7}. (A) -Extrapolated evidence level B, Class 11a.
- Minimal handling. Aim for responsive care every 6-8 hours including any required procedures e.g. CrUSS, gases, bloods (saturation probs may need changing more often to avoid burns, see skin care section). More frequent intervention at consultant discretion^{1,7}. (A) - Extrapolated evidence level B, Class 11a.
- Central lines: aspiration and flushing of UAC/UVC is done slowly over minimum of 30 seconds to avoid rapid fluctuations of cerebral haemodynamics¹. (A) - Extrapolated evidence level B, Class 11a.
- 2-person technique to do care including change of nappies to avoid head down position and elevation of legs as per neuroprotective care bundle. (A)-Extrapolated evidence level B, Class 11a.
- Cranial US performed on D1 & 3 as a minimum by an experienced clinician able to minimize time spent and handling. Subsequent scans as per unit protocols. This should not delay transfer if infant needs transfer³. (A) -Extrapolated evidence level C, Class 11a.
- Minimise exposure to sensory stimuli (bright light, noise, cold and pain) and use of appropriate analgesia/sedation if required as per clinical team and local unit policy⁴. (B) Extrapolated evidence level C, Class 11a.
- Encourage parental positive skin touch in the first 72 hrs. (A) Encourage skin to skin as clinically appropriate as per unit policy after first 72 hrs. (B) Extrapolated evidence level C, Class 11a.
- Maintain normal temperature and avoid hypothermia^{6,8}. (B) Extrapolated evidence level C, Class 11a.
- Consider NIRS monitoring as an adjunct haemodynamics monitoring tool as per local unit protocol. (B) Extrapolated evidence level C, Class 11a.
- Avoid hypoglycaemia and hyperglycaemia, treat rapidly when occurs and repeat glucose within 1 hour when it does occur². (A)
- Avoid hypocarbia ($PCO_2 < 4.5$ kPa), making ventilation changes and repeating gas within the hour, until PCO_2 in the normal range. (A)

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9: Family centred support (including palliative care) and neonatal team support

Recommendation Allocations

- (A) Practices that should virtually always be practiced.
- (B) Evidence of benefit unclear – variation in practice likely.
- (C) Unknown efficacy and safety - items that still need evidence and may be practiced as part of extended practice from infants born more mature or part of ethically approved research.

Recommendations

Family centred support-General principles

- Neonatal services and pathways for parents should align with a **trauma-informed approach** to family and staff wellbeing¹¹. (A)
- Families should have access to **formalised psychosocial support**, in line with Best Start¹⁵ recommendations, Delivering Effective Services in Perinatal and Infant Mental Health¹⁶ (2019), and National Bereavement Care Neonatal Death Pathway.
 - Services should consider how to deliver support **equitably**, regardless of length or level of stay or medical outcome¹⁰. (A)
- Staff teams should access training in psychosocial interventions for supporting neonatal families that draw on models such as '**psychological first aid**'. The emotional support provided by neonatal unit staff at the cot side can ensure that families fundamentally⁶: (A)
 - Feel supported via their experience of day-to-day communication with staff teams
 - Feel emotionally 'contained' through opportunities to talk about experiences if they choose to, with staff.
 - Have opportunities to have difficult attributions or beliefs compassionately heard and responded to e.g. 'It's my fault'
- Parents of infants born extremely preterm will be impacted across different domains including stress responses, anticipatory grief processes, the transition to parenthood, and relationship building with their new baby. Neonatal teams can:
 - Adopt **Family Integrated Care** principles and practices including supporting families to be involved in delivering hands-on care, if they choose/can² (A)
 - Support families to take part in cares informed by and consistent with the principles of **developmental care** (A)
 - Acknowledge the individual ways that emotional complexity can manifest for parents at difficult times and are mindful that family choices may not always align with staff expectations (A)
 - Recognise every "first thing" as a first for the family (A)

- Parents may or may not be ready to be addressed by terms such as “Mum” or “Dad” –ask parents how they would like to be referred to and record this, so this is used consistently with follow-up checks with parents as care progresses and advice updated accordingly (A)
- Ask parents if they would like to use milestone cards or alternative means of marking moments to support the **building of a psychological narrative of events** (A)
- Staff to support **family communication** with tools or aids (A)
 - vCreate
 - Communication boards
- Support the space to **promote bonding and parenting**, whilst acknowledging that some parents may not be ready/able – “Make the most of every moment” (A)
 - Begin making memories from birth (don’t wait until death is imminent or has occurred)
 - Package of care at admission – footprints, photo, bonding squares, bookbug bag
 - Welcome the baby as a little person (“congratulations” may not be appropriate but ‘welcome to the world’ may be a helpful alternative; take care not to use negative language “I’m so sorry your baby has come so early”)
- If parents have had a multiple birth, they face the challenge of preparing for the possibility their baby/babies may die whilst caring for their other baby/babies. Support the family by focussing equally on the baby/babies who may die and the sibling or siblings¹⁰. (A)

Family centred support - Palliative care

- All maternity and neonatal teams should be able to provide quality **comfort-focused care** at birth to families who have chosen this pathway, after a collaborative discussion (see Group 1 recommendations) as described in the BAPM FfP, and neonatal teams should be able to deliver supportive **end-of-life and bereavement care**. Both comfort-focused care and end-of-life care should align with principles in the National Bereavement Care Pathway for Neonatal Death^{1,10}. (A)
 - Suggest palliative care leads/champions in Midwifery, Neonatal Nursing and Neonatology (A/B)
- Suggest **parallel care planning** (delivery of intensive care whilst planning care of anticipated complications/deteriorations/death) routinely at these gestations from admission⁷. (A/B)
 - Document this in an **anticipatory care plan (ACP)** which embodies individualised shared decision-making and of which parents hold a copy^{4,8}.
- Use the right team to discuss parallel care planning. The right team is compassionate, confident, skilled and trained^{8,10}. (A)
- Support consistent family communication with/by:
 - continuity of staff (medical and nursing) where possible
 - providing parents with written transcripts of professional conversations¹⁰ (A/B)

- If an infant dies unexpectedly and quickly, staff should focus on explaining the known facts to parents, providing supportive end of life care and memory making¹⁰. (A)
- Ongoing care after death¹⁰ (A)
 - Continue to support family time (hospital, hospice, home) with use of cuddle cot
 - Offer bereavement support, share information about key contact, CHAS
 - Discuss Perinatal Mortality Review Tool and Post-mortem
 - Discuss lactation support and Scottish Milk Bank memory milk gift
 - Support family in transfer of care to mortuary team (e.g., in pram, Moses basket etc)
 - Introduce third parties and recognise benefit of peer support

Family centred support – Bereavement care

- If an infant sadly dies, units should ensure there are pathways in place to meet the emotional needs of bereaved families that are consistent with National Bereavement Care Neonatal Death Pathway¹⁰. (A)
- Neonatal services and pathways for bereaved parents should align with a **trauma-informed approach** to family and staff wellbeing¹¹. (A)
- Teams should be aware of the emotional processes around grief which should be normalised and not pathologized within a mental health framework¹². (A)
 - Families should be supported to access appropriate specialist grief supports for parents and for siblings.
 - Pathways should be in place to provide access to mental health assessment and treatment, should mental health needs or risks emerge following a bereavement.
- Families affected by previous baby loss should have access to supports should this experience impact on emotional health in a **next pregnancy**¹⁶. (A)

Psychological support for the neonatal team

Neonatal staff teams are routinely involved in delivery of complex care with families managing significant stress. The interpersonal demands on staff will include sensitive delivery of medical information and complex decision making alongside compassionately receiving and holding the family's expression of their stress responses and anticipatory grief processes which will unfold concurrently with the transition to parenthood and relationship building with their new baby. Levels of staff burnout (state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion caused by long-term involvement in emotionally demanding situations) can be high in healthcare settings with rates in NICU's varying by profession and ranging from 7.5-54.4%¹⁴. Risk factors for medical staff have been reported to include less time in post, negative beliefs around quality of life with disability, and recurrent thoughts of deaths³.

Care of staff wellbeing will have three broad functions:

- To provide staff with a culture of 'psychological safety' which supports the **self-management of psychological processes and dynamics in self and with others**¹⁰. (A)
To this end units should:
 - Aim to provide an emotionally supportive environment for staff where challenges can be discussed openly, and individual needs are acknowledged and met
 - A trauma-informed approach to family and staff wellbeing should be implemented and monitored¹¹.
 - Hold spaces to acknowledge difficult events and normalise reflective spaces/practice groups
 - Responsive after an event (Peer Support) and/or
 - Regular access to reflective practice as psychological first aid
 - Acknowledge staff grief after the death of an infant
- To ensure staff have access to supportive training and materials to deliver complex interpersonal tasks. (A) Units should consider and implement appropriate training for all staff in:
 - Normal responses to infant hospitalisation
 - Communication skills within a recognised framework that improves practice e.g., EC4H⁵ training or simulation training¹⁷
 - Developmental care
 - Family integrated care
 - Perinatal and infant mental health
- To ensure staff are encouraged to self-monitor wellbeing, be mindful of 'warning signs' for burnout and mental distress, and have access to appropriate supports^{9,10,13}. (A)

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Glossary

ACP - Anticipatory Care Plan

AKI – Acute Kidney Injury

BAPM FfP – British Association of Perinatal Medicine Framework for Practice

BBE - Bare Below the Elbow

BP – Blood Pressure

BPD - Bronchopulmonary dysplasia

CHAS- Children's Hospices Across Scotland

CPAP - Continuous Positive Airway Pressure

CPR - Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation

CRF - Capillary Refill

CrUSS - Cranial Ultrasonography

DART - Dexamethasone dosing: (a randomised trial) protocol for low dose dexamethasone

DAT – Direct Antibody Test

DCC – Deferred Cord Clamping

DIC - Disseminated Intravascular Coagulation

EC4H – Effective Communication for Healthcare

ECG – Electrocardiogram

EPR – Electronic Patient Record

ET - Endotracheal Tube

ETCO₂ - End Tidal CO₂

FBC – Full Blood Count

FFP - Fresh Frozen Plasma

FiO₂ - Fraction of inspired oxygen

GA – Gestational Age

Hb – Haemoglobin

HFNC - High Flow Nasal Cannula

HFOV - High Frequency Oscillatory Ventilation

iNO – inhaled Nitric Oxide

IPPV - Intermittent Positive Pressure Ventilation

IUT – In-utero Transfer

IV – Intravenous

IVH - Intraventricular Haemorrhage

LFT's – Liver Function Tests

LNUs – Local Neonatal Units

LV / RV – Left Ventricle/ Right Ventricle

NaCl – Sodium Chloride

NAVA - Neurally-Adjusted Ventilatory Assist

NCPAP - Nasal Continuous Positive Airway Pressure

NEC - Necrotising Enterocolitis

NES – NHS National Education for Scotland

nHFOV - Non-invasive High-Frequency Oscillatory Ventilation

NICU – Neonatal Intensive Care Unit

NIPPV - Non-Invasive Positive Pressure Ventilation

NIRS - Near Infra-Red Spectroscopy

NLS – Newborn Life Support

NSCS - Neonatal Skin Condition Score

NSRA - Neonatal Skin Risk Assessment

PCO₂ - Partial Pressure of Arterial Carbon Dioxide

PDA - Patent Ductus Arteriosus

PEEP - Positive End-Expiratory Pressure

PN - Parenteral Nutrition

PPHN - Persistent Pulmonary Hypertension of the Newborn

PVC - Peripheral Cannula

RCOG – Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists

RCT - Randomised Controlled Trials

RSV - Respiratory Syncytial Virus

SCUs – Special Care Units

SIRA - Skin Injury Risk Assessment Record

SPN – Scottish Perinatal Network

SRAMT - Neonatal Skin Risk Assessment and Management Tool

SVR - Systemic Vascular Resistance

TCM - Transcutaneous CO₂ Monitoring

UAC/UVC - Umbilical Artery Catheter /Umbilical Vein Catheter

U&E's – Urea and Electrolytes

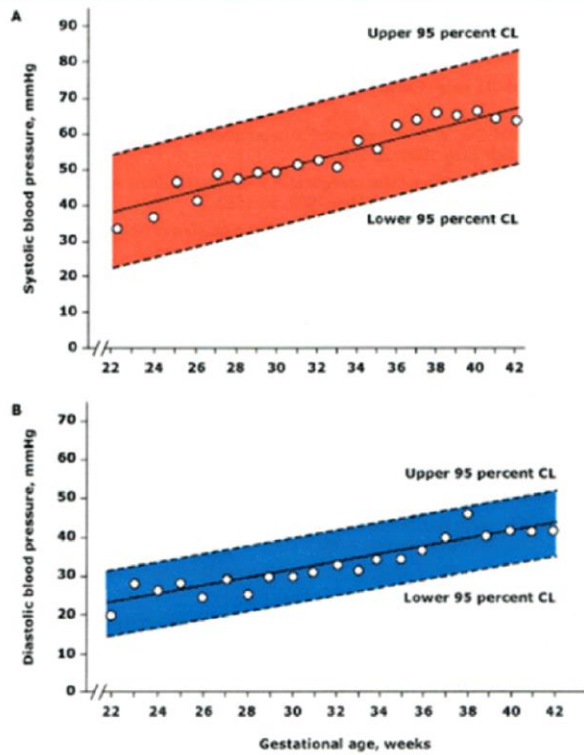
US – Ultrasound

UVC - Umbilical Venous Catheters

Appendix 1. Normative BP Values, inotropes, Hypotension and PDA flow charts and NIRS.

Table 1. BP thresholds at the 3rd centile for gestational age

Neonatal blood pressure based on gestational age



Reference: Zubrow AB et al , J Perinatology 1994; 16(6): 470-9

Table 2: Normative BP values

GA (weeks)	SYSTOLIC (mmHg)	MEAN (mmHg)	DIASTOLIC (mmHg)
24	32	26	15
25	34	26	16
26	36	27	17
27	38	27	17
28	40	28	18
29	42	28	19
30	43	29	20
31	45	30	20
32	46	30	21
33	47	30	22
34	48	31	23
35	49	32	24
36	50	32	25

Reference: Giesinger et al Seminars in Perinatology 2016; 40:174-188

Table 3: Suggested interpretation of abnormalities BP referencing systolic and diastolic values

Systolic BP < 3 rd Centile (narrow pulse pressure)	PPHN, cardiogenic shock(LV dysfunction, poor transition and high SVR or arrhythmias), early sepsis "cold" shock
Diastolic hypotension	PDA, systemic hypovolaemia, evolving warm shock
Systolic + diastolic hypotension	Very large PDA, established warm shock, severe PPHN, cardiogenic shock (arrhythmia or severe dysfunction)
Hypertension – may be narrow pulse pressure	Agitation: pain, imminent pulmonary haemorrhage, intracranial haemorrhage, kidney injury, impaired renal function, coarctation of the aorta, renal/aortic thrombosis

SVR = systemic vascular resistance

PDA= Patent ductus arteriosus

PPHN= persistent pulmonary hypertension of the newborn

Table 4: Comparisons of net effects of "inotrope" agents

Agent	SV	SVR	PVR
Dopamine	↑	↑↑	↑↑↑
Norepinephrine	↑ / (no effect)	↑↑↑	↓ / (no effect)
Vasopressin	↓	↑↑↑	↓
Dobutamine	↑↑	no effect	no effect
Milrinone	↑↑		↓↓
Epinephrine	↑↑↑	↑↑↑	↑↑

SV = stroke volume, SVR = systemic vascular resistance, PVR = pulmonary vascular resistance

Reference: Giesinger et al Seminars in Perinatology 40 (174-188) 2016

Appendix 2 (Chart 1: systemic hypotension flow chart)

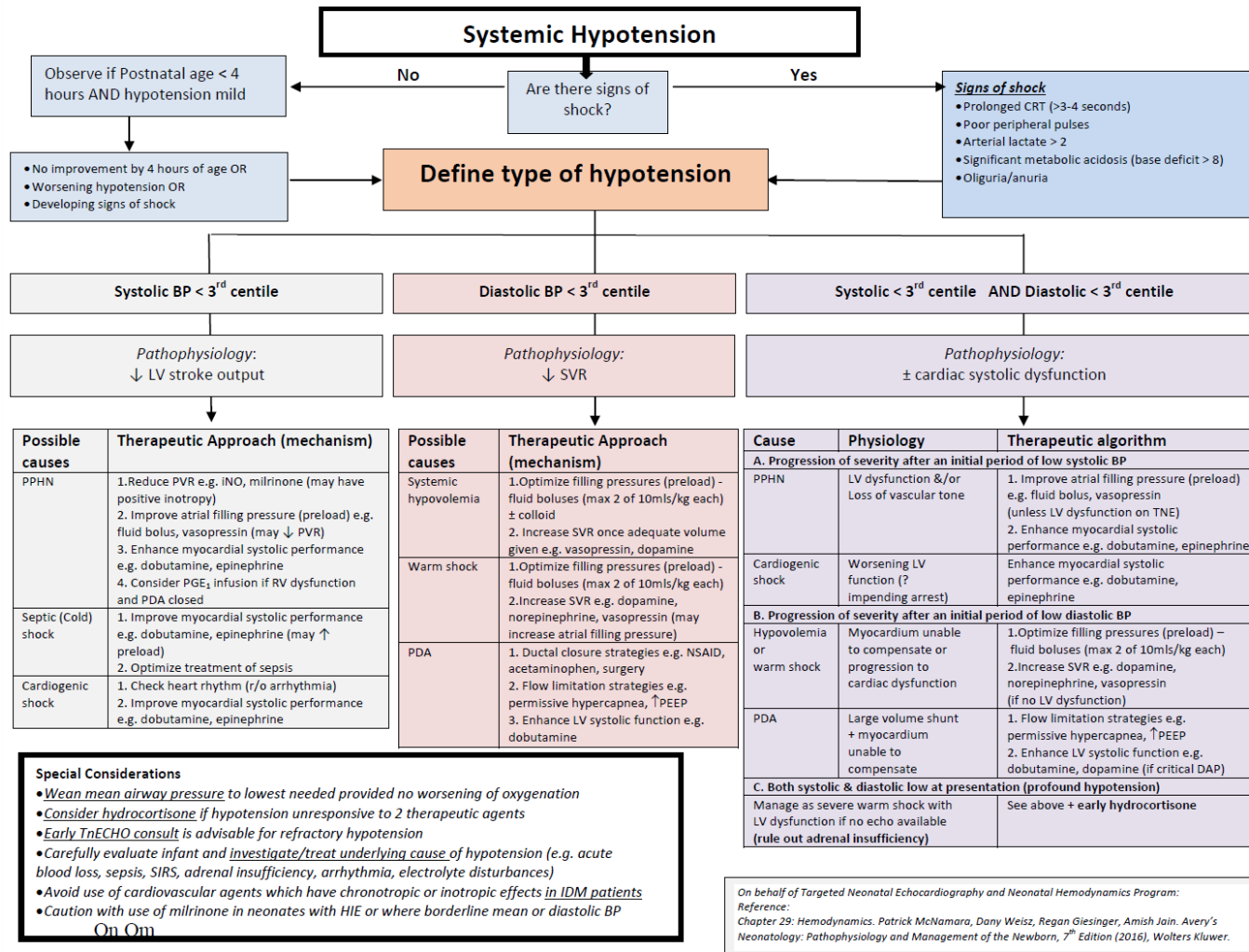
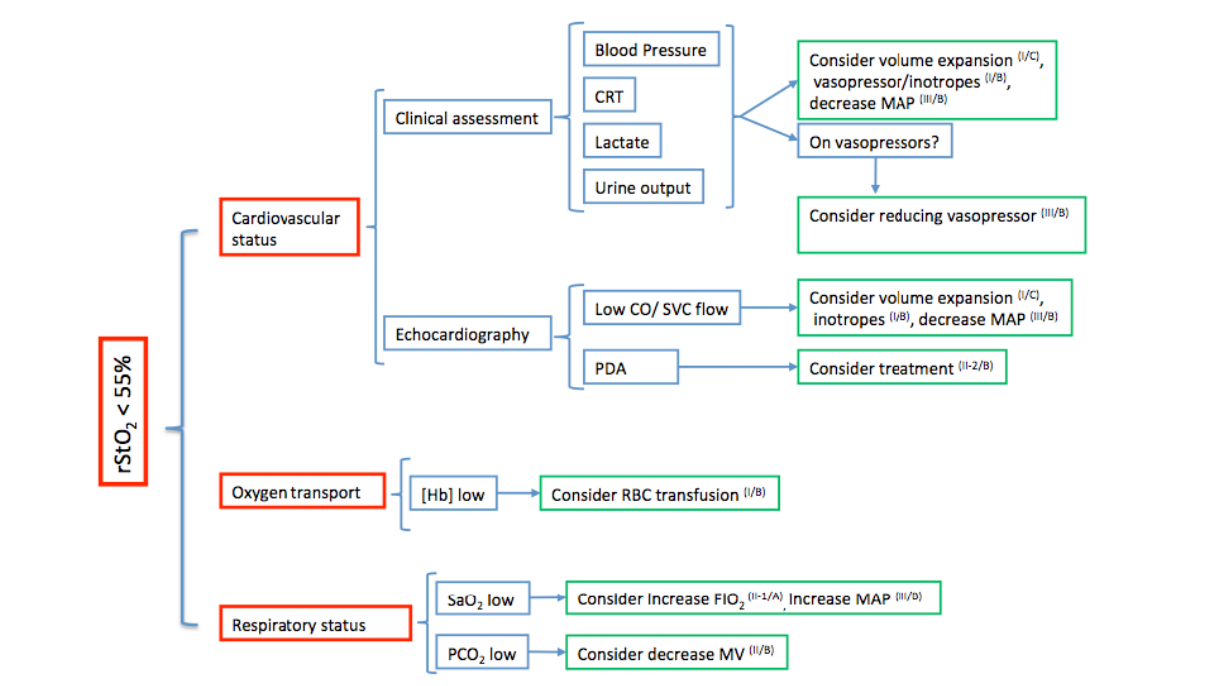


Chart 2: Clinical treatment guideline in response to low NIRS thresholds from SafeBoosC consortium

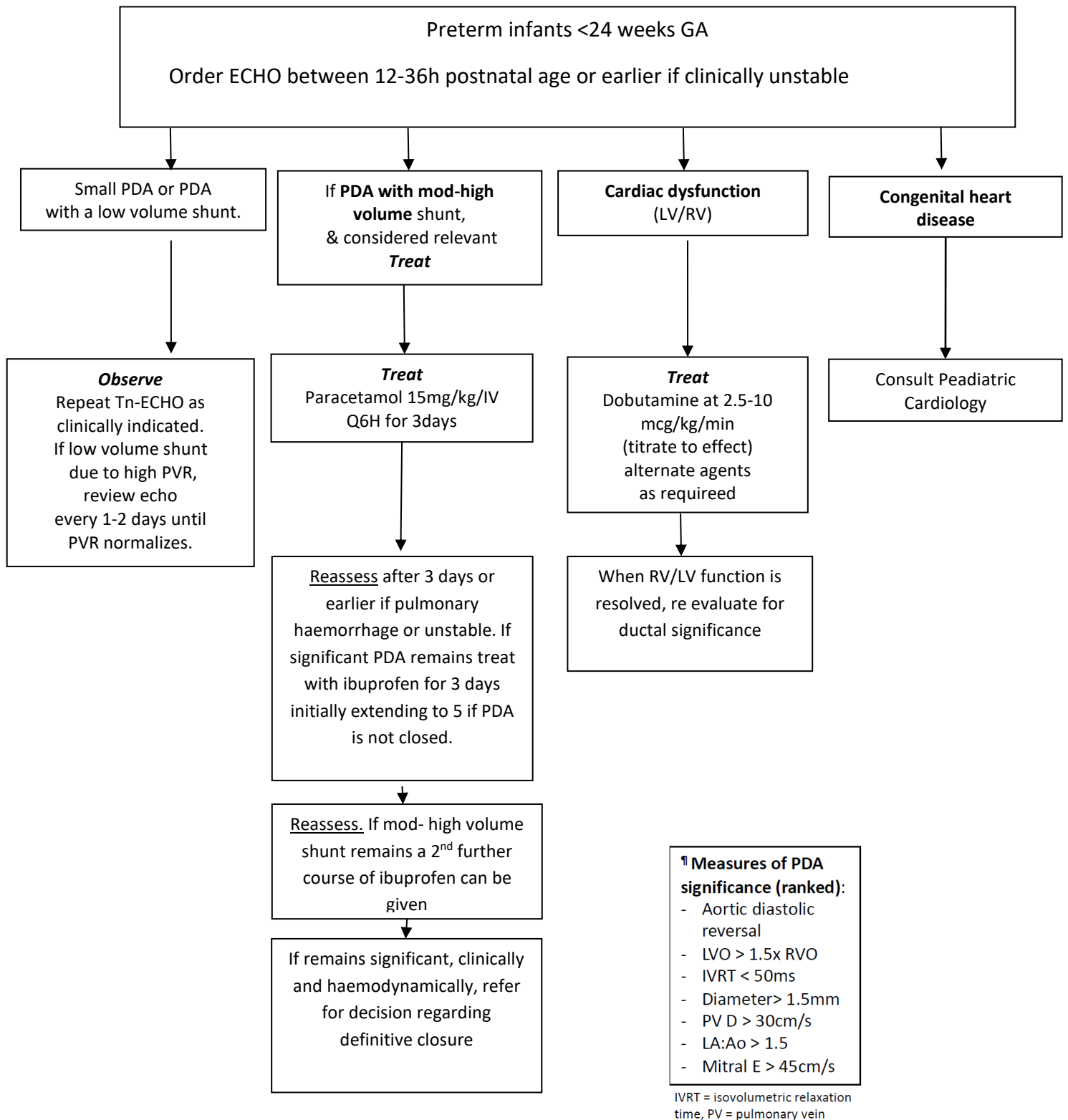


Treatment Guideline for SafeBoosCII &III RCTs. In brackets the level of evidence and recommendation for a given intervention (US preventive Services Task Force system 2001). Note the rStO2 value here is 55% but depends on the cerebral oximeter used (see Table 5).







Table 5: Hypoxic thresholds for different NIRS devices

NIRS Device	Hypoxic threshold %
FORESIGHT small	66
FORESIGHT non-adhesive small	67
NIRO small	61
NIRO small re-usable	63
NIRO large	62
NIRO large re-usable	62
INVOS neo	63
SenSmart neo 8004CB-NA	66
Oxyprem 1.4: re-usable	48
O3 Pediatric	64
O3 Neonatal	64
Egos	56

Chart 3: Guideline for PDA screening and early haemodynamic management in extremely preterm infants



Appendix 3

COLOUR	EXAMPLE	CHARACTERISTICS	AIMS	PRIMARY DRESSINGS	SECONDARY DRESSINGS
BLACK NECROTIC TISSUE		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dead tissue • Hard, black eschar • Brown leathery appearance 	<p>Rehydrate necrotic tissue to facilitate autolytic debridement.</p> <p>*Debridement only if holistic assessment permits</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hydrogel • Honey dressing- Actilite, Medihoney. • Hydrocolloid – duoderm extra thin. • Hydro-responsive dressing – hydrosorb 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hydrocolloid • Simple low absorbent dressing • Foam dressing if wound becomes wet or macerated
YELLOW SLOUGHY TISSUE		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sloughy 48evitalized tissue, yellow in appearance • Can be soft, moist and stringy in consistency or more firm when dry 	<p>To remove slough from wound bed as this will hinder healing process</p>	<p><u>LOW EXUDATE</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hydrogel • Honey dressing – Actilite, Activon • Hydro-responsive dressing -Hydrosorb <p><u>HIGH EXUDATE</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed fibre gel dressing – Aquacel. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wound pad • Simple absorbent dressing • Non-adhesive or adhesive foam, retention tape /bandage
RED GRANULATING TISSUE		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Granulating wound. • Shiny, moist with healthy red colouration and a 'lumpy' surface appearance due to new connective tissue and capillary buds 	<p>To protect the wound and maintain a warm, moist optimum healing environment through exudate management</p>	<p><u>LOW EXUDATE</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hydrogel • Hydrosorb • Duoderm extra thin <p><u>HIGH EXUDATE</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed fibre gel dressing – Aquacel • Foam if superficial wound bed – Kliniderm foam 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wound pad • Simple absorbent Dressing • Non-adhesive or adhesive foam, retention tape /bandage
PINK EPITHELIAL TISSUE		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Epithelialising wound. Epithelial cells migrating over healthy granulation • Shallow with low exudate. Pink/white in colour 	<p>Protection and prevention of trauma to fragile new cells</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-adherent dressing- Mepitel/ Mepitel One • Hydrocolloid – Duoderm Extra Thin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple absorbent pad for low exudate • Foam dressing if remaining in place for more than 48hours
GREEN INFECTED TISSUE	 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deteriorating or static wound • Increased slough or necrosis • Increased levels of exudate • Malodour • Increased pain • Surrounding erythema • Hypergranulation (can include any of the above) 	<p>Reduce microbial load at wound bed. Debridement only if holistic assessment permits* Protect the wound whilst ensuring exudate levels are managed to protect surrounding skin.</p>	<p><u>LOW EXUDATE</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hydrogel • Honey dressing – Actilite, Activon • Hydro-responsive dressing -Hydrosorb <p><u>HIGH EXUDATE</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed fibre gel dressing – Aquacel. • Alginate gel with antimicrobial – Flaminal hydro 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wound pad with film • Adhesive foam or non- adhesive foam with retention tape/bandage • Super absorbent dressing if highly exuding

Appendix 4: NHSGGC Wound Classification Product Selection Guide

Type	Indications	Function	Precautions	Products
Barrier	Nappy Rash	Protects against moisture-associated skin damage Protects against epidermal stripping Protects against irritation from adhesives	May be difficult to assess wound with opaque preparations Residual cream or ointment should not be removed prior to reapplication	Conotrane Bepanthen Metanium White petrolatum Zinc oxide ointment Cavilon No-Sting barrier
Transparent polyurethane film	Skin tears Superficial wounds with little to no exudate	Prevents wound contamination Provides moist wound healing Promotes autolytic debridement Non-absorptive	Semi-permanent; not intended for frequent dressing changes May result in epidermal stripping (if adhesive present)	Tegaderm Opsite
Contact layer	Skin tears Superficial wounds with little to no exudate Minimal to moderate exudative wounds Pressure ulcers Partial and full-thickness wounds	Prevents wound contamination Provides moist wound healing Allows transfer of exudate into absorbant dressing Nonabsorptive	Some contain softsilicone adhesive Requires secondary dressing	Mepitel Mepital-One DuoDerm Extra Thin Lomatuell pro
Hydrocolloid (gelatin, pectin, and/or carboxymethyl cellulose)	Minimal to moderate exudative wounds Pressure ulcers Partial and full-thickness wounds	Prevents wound contamination Promotes autolytic debridement Minimal absorption Ease of use	Caution in infected wounds May cause maceration of peri-wound May result in epidermal stripping (if adhesive present)	Duoderm Tegasorb Duoderm extra thin Comfeel plus Comfeel plus transparent

<p>Polyurethane foam and composite</p>	<p>Moderate to heavy exudative wounds</p> <p>Partial and full-thickness wounds</p> <p>Peristomal</p> <p>Pressure redistribution</p>	<p>Ease of removal (only if non-adherent or containing soft silicone adhesive) Ease of use</p> <p>Moderate absorption</p> <p>Pressure redistribution</p> <p>Comfortable</p>	<p>Not for use in dry wounds Requires a secondary dressing (unless composite)</p>	<p>Kliniderm foam silicone lite or border lite</p> <p>Tegaderm foam</p> <p>Tegaderm foam adhesive</p> <p>Allevyn life</p>
<p>Hydrogel</p>	<p>Minimal exudate or dry wounds</p> <p>Partial and full-thickness wounds</p> <p>Burns</p>	<p>Pressure redistribution</p> <p>Reduce pain Promotes autolytic debridement</p> <p>Promotes epithelialization</p> <p>Adds moisture Minimal to moderate absorption</p> <p>Fills dead space Ease of removal</p>	<p>May over-hydrate wound</p> <p>May macerate peri-wound; consider applying skin sealant first as protection</p> <p>Requires secondary dressing</p>	<p>Sheet: Hydrosorb</p> <p>Amorphous: Intrasite</p>
<p>Hydrofiber (sodium carboxymethyl cellulose)</p>	<p>Moderate to heavy exudative wounds</p> <p>Partial and full-thickness wounds</p> <p>Wound dehiscence</p> <p>Infected wounds</p>	<p>Promotes autolytic debridement Moderate to marked absorption Ease of removal</p>	<p>Requires secondary dressing</p>	<p>Aquacel</p>
<p>Alginate</p>				<p>Flaminal Hydro</p> <p>Flaminal Forte</p>

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