

# Neonatal Handbook



## Neonatal Abstinence Scoring System

Infants at risk of narcotic withdrawal are assessed for signs of withdrawal ½ to 1hr after each feed. Infants who display signs of withdrawal will score from signs in each of the three sections of the scoring chart. The scoring chart is designed for term infants who are fed 4 hourly. Allowances must be made for infants who are preterm or beyond the initial newborn period.

SYSTEM	SIGN	SCORE												
C.N.S.	Excessive cry	2												
	Continuous cry	3												
	Sleeps <1hr after feed	3												
	Sleeps <2hrs after feed	2												
	Sleeps <3hrs after feed	1												
	Over active Moro reflex	2												
	Very over active Moro reflex	3												
	Mild tremors disturbed *	1												
	Mod/severe tremors disturbed *	2												
	Mild tremors undisturbed *	3												
	Mod/severe tremors undisturbed *	4												
	Increased muscle tone	2												
	Excoriation *	1												
	Myoclonic jerks	3												
	Generalised convulsions	5												
G.I.T.	Excessive Sucking	1												
	Poor Feeding *	2												
	Regurgitation *	2												
	Projectile Vomiting	3												
	Loose Stools	2												
	Watery Stools	3												
OTHER	Sweating	1												
	Fever 37.3 to 38.3 C	1												
	Fever 38.4 C and above	2												
	Frequent yawning (>3-4 in 1/2hr)	1												
	Mottling	1												
	Nasal Stuffiness	1												
	Sneezing (>3-4 in 1/2hr)	2												
	Nasal flaring	1												
	Respiratory rate >60/min.	1												
	Respiratory rate >60/min. & retraction	2												
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>														

Adapted from L.P.Finnegan (1986)

### Explanation of Signs

- Tremors – infants should only get one score from the four options in this category
- Excoriation –score when presents, rescore only if it increases or appears in another area
- Poor Feeding – score if slow to feed or baby takes inadequate amounts
- Regurgitation – score if it occurs more frequently than usual in a newborn