NEONATAL ABSTINENCE SCORING SYSTEM GUIDELINE


**System** | **Symptom** | **Description** | **Should Be Scored If:**
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**Excessive high pitched cry** | Cries intermittently or continuously for up to 5 mins despite caregiver intervention. | Infants unable to decrease crying within a 15 sec Period using self-consoling measures.
**Continuous high pitched cry** | Infant cries intermittently or continuously for greater than 5 mins despite caregiver intervention. | NB: Since an infant’s cry may vary in pitch, this should not be scored if high-pitched crying is not accompanied by other signs described above.
**Sleep** | Scores based on the longest period of sleep within the entire scoring interval. | Include light and deep sleep (Deep- regular breathing, eyes closed, no spontaneous activity; Light – irregular breathing, brief opening of eyes at intervals, some sucking movements.
**Hyperactive Moro Reflex** (Moro Reflex: Lift the infant slightly off the bed by the wrists or arms and allow the infant to fall back on the bed. NB: should not be performed when infant is crying or irritable.) | Infant exhibits pronounced jitteriness of the hands during, or at the end of, the Moro Reflex.
**Mild tremors when disturbed** | Infant exhibits observable tremors of the hands or feet whilst being handled.
**Moderate-severe tremors when disturbed** | Infant exhibits observable tremors of the arm/s or leg/s, with or without tremors of the hands or feet, whilst being handled.
**Increased Muscle Tone** | Should be assessed when infant awake but not crying. | There is tight flexion of the infants arms and legs (unable to slightly extend the arms or legs)
**Excoration** | If occurs on chin, knees, cheeks, elbow, toes or nose. | Does not include excoriated nappy area caused by loose stools.
**Myoclonic jerks** | The infant exhibits twitching movements of the muscles of the face or extremities, or if jerking movements of the arms or legs are observed.
**Generalised convulsions** | Generalised activity involving tonic (rigid) extensions of all limbs (but may be limited to just one limb), or manifested by tonic flexion of all limbs. | Generalised jitteriness of extremities is observed. Hold or flex the limbs, if the jitteriness does not stop, it is a seizure.
**Frequent yawning** | The infant yawns greater than 3 times within scoring interval. | There is frequent yawning greater than 3 times within the scoring interval.
**Mottling** | Motting is present on chest, trunk, arms or legs. | There is mottling on chest, trunk, arms or legs.
**Sneezing** | The infant sneezed more than 3 times in the scoring interval. | May occur as individual episodes or may occur serially.
**NB:** Present at any time during the scoring interval.
**Respiration rate** | Cannot be assessed while the infant is crying. | NB: Cannot be assessed while the infant is crying.
**Excessive Sucking** | The infant shows increased (>3 times) rooting (turns head to one side searching for food) while displaying rapid swiping movements of hand across mouth prior to or after a feed. | Scored if stool, which may or may not be explosive, is curdy or seedy in appearance.
**Poor feeding** | The infant demonstrates excessive sucking prior to a feed, yet sucks infrequently during feeding, taking small amounts, and/or demonstrates an uncoordinated sucking reflex. | A liquid stool, without a water ring on the nappy, should also be scored as loose.
**Regurgitation** | Regurgitation, not associated with burping, occurs 2 or more times during the feed. | Regurgitation, not associated with burping, occurs 2 or more times during the feed.
**Projectile vomiting** | 1 or more projectile vomiting episodes occurs either during or immediately after a feed. | Projectile vomiting 1 or more projectile vomiting episodes occurs either during or immediately after a feed.
**Loose stools** | Scored if stool, which may or may not be explosive, is curdy or seedy in appearance. | A liquid stool, without a water ring on the nappy, should also be scored as loose.
**Watery stools** | The infant has soft, mushy, liquid or hard stools that are accompanied by a water ring on the nappy. | There is watery stools.