



## Newborn Eye Prophylaxis Consent/Refusal

Eye prophylaxis with antibiotic eye ointment is an option to be administered to your newborn within two hours of birth to prevent eye infection called conjunctivitis. Conjunctivitis ranges from mild to severe, with some forms quickly progressing to cause blindness in the newborn. To prevent this infection, the midwife gives an antibiotic eye ointment usually erythromycin to the newborn within two hours of birth. This practice began in the late 1800's and reduce the risk of newborns developing the most serious form of infection from 10% of babies to 1% of babies.

There are many different types of bacteria and viruses that can cause this infection in the baby. Among these are the bacteria responsible for some of the common sexually transmitted infections, such as gonorrhea and chlamydia, although other non-sexually transmitted agents can also cause a problem such as Staphylococcus aureus, Streptococcus pneumoniae, or Haemophilus influenzae bacteria. Bacteria present in the cervix, urethra, or birth canal can make its way to the newborn's eyes during the birth process. Administering erythromycin ointment decreases the chance bacteria or viruses will cause an infection and thereby decrease the risk of blindness.

It is important to note that erythromycin ointment given within two hours of delivery helps to prevent most infections, but it is not 100% and it is no longer thought to protect against an infection caused by chlamydia. Therefore, it is still very important that the midwife be called with any questions regarding discharge from the newborn eyes.

Erythromycin may cause blurred vision for a few moments in the newborn, so the midwife strives to put the ointment in within two hours of birth, but after the newborn bonding time is over. There are no known adverse reactions to erythromycin, although a few people have a sensitivity to the ointment, it is not thought to occur in newborns.

Texas Health and Safety code 81.091 requires that midwives administer eye prophylaxis to the newborn at any birth they attend. To fail to do this is considered to be a Class B misdemeanor. As of September 1, 2017 Bill 2886 states that if a midwife is unable to apply the prophylaxis as required by 81.091 due to the parent's objection, the midwife is not subject to criminal, civil, administrative liability, or any professional disciplinary action for failure to administer the prophylaxis.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have been fully informed of Texas Health and Safety Code, 81.091 stating that it is mandatory for all newborns in Texas to receive erythromycin eye ointment within two (2) hours of birth. I understand Shanna Hinrichs LM, CPM is under required to fulfill the actions of this law enacted by the state of Texas.

- I CONSENT to the eye ointment being applied after birth.
- My midwife has fully informed me that she MUST administer eye prophylaxis; however, I strongly object to this medical treatment for my child. I refuse the administration of erythromycin ointment being applied to my newborn's eyes. Administering this prophylaxis to my child is going against my express will.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Client's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Client's Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Midwife's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Midwife's Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date