

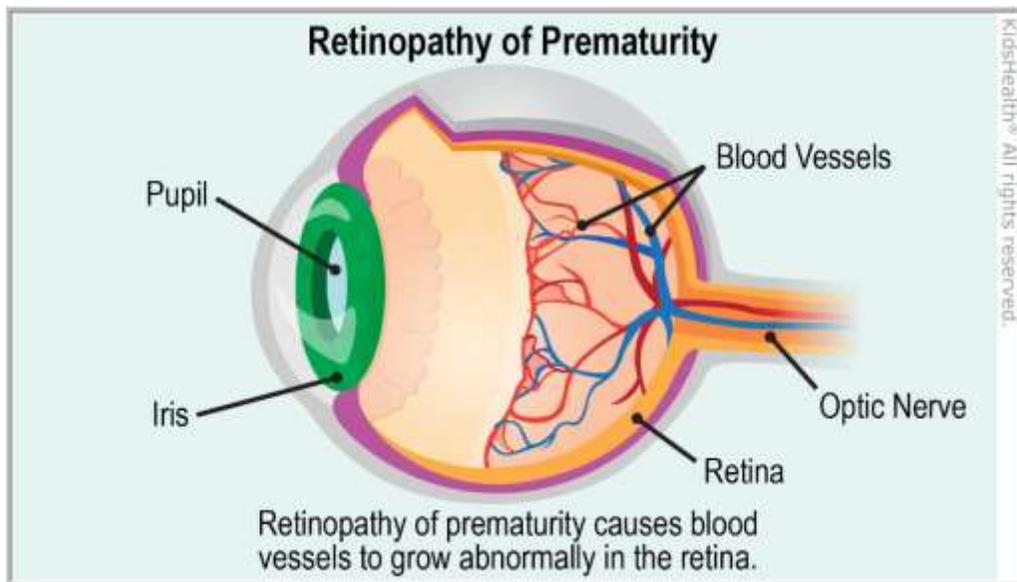


Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP) in Babies with BPD

Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP) is an eye disease that some premature babies develop. ROP is more common in babies born before 30 week's gestation, or weighing less than 1500 grams.

The retina inside of the eye is not fully developed at birth in a preterm infant.

- The retina is the back layer or "screen" on the inside of the eye that converts light into a nerve signal that goes to the brain.
- In premature infants, the blood vessels that supply or "feed" the retina are not completely formed.
- These incomplete blood vessels may grow and spread abnormally throughout the retina leading to the development of ROP.



Most frequently, ROP is mild and does not require treatment. Sometimes, however ROP may lead to serious complications including blindness.

- Ophthalmologists (eye doctors) closely monitor premature infants for the development of ROP.
- Your baby will get scheduled eye exams during their stay in the NICU.
- You will know the schedule of these exams, and can always ask questions about results and timing of the next exam.
- If your infant requires treatment for ROP, the Ophthalmologist may perform laser therapy on the retina or inject a medicine into the eye.



Depending on what is best for your baby, your Ophthalmologist and care team will explain all of these treatment options in more detail.

In ROP, the abnormal growth of blood vessels in the eye can start because of too much oxygen, similar to the injury of lungs in BPD. The role of oxygen in the body is complex – different organs that need it can also be harmed by it.

With the most up-to-date knowledge we do our best to balance all the factors of the developing premature baby, paying special attention to the lungs and eyes.

Premature infants both with and without ROP are at risk for developing other eye problems in early childhood such as strabismus (crossed eyes), amblyopia (lazy eye) and myopia (nearsightedness).

Many infants with BPD will also develop ROP.

Oxygenation, or how the body processes oxygen, plays a big role in both problems.

It is extremely important that you keep all scheduled appointments for your child after discharge from the NICU so that, if/when needed, doctors can provide treatments to improve your baby's eyesight later in life.