

# Patient Information Leaflet

## Heart Murmurs in Newborn Babies



As a teaching hospital, we conduct education and research to improve healthcare for our patients. During your visit students may be involved in your care, or you may be asked to participate in a clinical trial. Please speak to your doctor or nurse if you have any concerns.

Chief Executive: Joe Harrison  
Chairman: Simon Lloyd

## Questions & Answers

### What is a heart murmur?

A heart murmur is an additional sound made by blood as it passes through the heart and blood vessels heard when listening to your baby's heartbeat. A heart murmur does not always mean a heart problem and majority of the times it is heard because of the changes in the blood flow which happens as the baby adapts to the life outside mother's womb.

### Are heart murmurs common in Newborn babies?

Yes. Up to one in three newborn babies will have a heart murmur in the first few days of life. Most of these disappear spontaneously.

### Is it serious?

The reason we listen to all newborn babies' heartbeat is to exclude serious heart problems; however, the majority of babies with heart murmurs do not have an abnormal heart. Many are innocent murmurs. An innocent murmur is turbulent blood flow through a normal heart and will have no effect on the health of your baby.

### What happens now?

The doctor may ask you some more questions about your baby to help rule out the possibility of heart problems. He/She may ask how well is your baby feeding or whether your baby has times when the tongue or lips go blue as well as asking about the pregnancy and family history. An examination including carefully listening to the baby's heart and feeling for the leg pulses is also performed.

### Will any further investigations be carried out?

All babies will initially have their oxygen saturation measured (to check oxygen levels in the blood), but the doctor may order a chest x-ray and an ECG (Heart Tracing) depending on the clinical findings.

## What if a problem is discovered?

If there is a problem the doctors will keep you updated on any problems they suspect or have diagnosed. This can involve the decision to admit to the neonatal unit for assessment and treatment. Remember however, that the heart murmurs are common and serious heart problems are rare.

## What happens when we go home?

If the murmur persists but no other heart abnormality is discovered then you will be asked to come back to the hospital in a week's time, either to the post natal ward or to the Paediatric assessment unit. You will then see a paediatric doctor who will re-examine your baby and measure your baby's oxygen saturation. He/She may decide to carry out a chest X-ray and an ECG depending on the clinical findings. This is to check if the murmur is still present or it has disappeared spontaneously.

## What happens after the 1 week follow up?

If at the 1 week follow up the murmur disappears and all other examinations/investigations are normal then no further action is required. But, if the murmur is still present and all other examinations/ investigations are normal then we will be referring your baby for a speciality test called ECHO which is an ultrasound scan of the heart. This will be done either at Oxford or at Milton Keynes within 4-6 weeks. This will confirm whether your baby has a heart problem or an innocent murmur.

## Is there anything I should do differently?

No. Just carry on with the usual care of your baby

## Is there anything I should look out for?

If your baby experiences any of the following symptoms please contact a medical professional immediately.

- Blue tongue or lips
- Mottled skin
- Being short of breath
- Breathing Fast
- Sweating
- Tiring during feeds or poor feeding
- Not gaining weight

If you are concerned, attend to the A&E department. **On your arrival inform the doctor that your baby has been found to have a heart murmur.**

**You may need to stay for further evaluations.**

## Who can I speak to if I have any further questions?

If you and your baby are still in the hospital, please speak to one of the Paediatric team who will be happy to help. After you and your baby have been discharged home, you can contact:

- Midwife
- Health visitor
- GP
- Paediatrician

## Further Information

Additional information about heart murmurs in babies can be obtained by logging on to the following websites:

[www.gosh.nhs.uk](http://www.gosh.nhs.uk)

[www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org)

Should you require any further advice, please contact one of the following numbers:

NHS direct 111

Urgent Care Centre 111

## Your Care

We endeavour to provide an excellent service at all times, but should you have any concerns please, raise these with the Matron or Senior Nurse. If they cannot resolve your concern, please contact our Patient Experience Team at [patientexperience@mkhospital.nhs.uk](mailto:patientexperience@mkhospital.nhs.uk)

**We ask for information about you so that you can receive proper care and treatment. This information remains confidential and is stored securely by the Trust in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018/GDPR. Further guidance can be found within our privacy notice found on our Trust website: [www.mkuh.nhs.uk](http://www.mkuh.nhs.uk)**

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