



Newborn heart murmur

Information for parents from the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit

Congratulations on the birth of your baby.

All newborn infants undergo a thorough examination in the first few days following birth. This examination looks for medical problems which may need treatment. During this examination, the health professional examining your baby has detected a heart murmur.

This leaflet explains:

- what a heart murmur is
- what this means for your baby
- what tests and follow-up your baby might need; and
- what signs to look out for when you return home.

We hope this leaflet will help to answer some of the questions you may have. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to a member of your healthcare team.

What is a heart murmur?

A heart murmur is an extra sound heard when listening to a baby's heart. It is a very common finding in the first day following birth. It is usually caused by the many changes that happen in the blood circulation around the time of birth.

A heart murmur does not always mean a heart problem, and many of these murmurs disappear in the days and weeks following birth. Occasionally, a heart murmur can be a sign of congenital heart disease.

What is congenital heart disease?

The term congenital heart disease means a heart problem present from birth. It covers many different problems affecting the newborn heart and circulation. Some of these problems need no specific treatment. However, some problems are more serious and need emergency treatment.

During your antenatal scans, your baby's heart would have been looked at to assess its structure and shape. However, this scan is not able to pick-up all congenital heart diseases, so the newborn examination is an extra check to look for congenital heart problems.

Your baby

During their examination, your baby was found to have a heart murmur. They will have been carefully examined by a health professional. Part of this examination will include checking the oxygen saturations in your baby's hand and foot.

Your baby will be kept in hospital for at least 24 hours. During this time, they will have regular observations. If the murmur is still present after 24 hours, a senior doctor will review your baby and go through a plan with you.

Will my baby have a follow-up appointment?

If the murmur is still present after 24 hours and no other heart abnormality is found, you will be asked to come back to hospital in 2 weeks for a follow-up appointment. At this appointment:

- if the murmur has disappeared, your baby will not need a follow-up; but
- if the murmur is still present, your baby will be referred for a heart scan.

What signs should I look out for at home?

Most babies who have heart murmurs remain well. However, it is important that you are aware of any signs that may show that your baby has congenital heart disease. These include:

- **Poor feeding / becoming sweaty during feeds**
- **Unusually fast breathing (at rest or during their feed)**
- **Blue or grey skin colour**
- **Cold hands and feet**
- **Unusually sleepy.**

What should I do if I am concerned that my baby is unwell?

If you have concerns or your baby is showing any of the signs listed above, you must seek urgent medical advice. Either go to your local Emergency Department, or call 999 for an ambulance, NHS 111 or your GP.

This leaflet has been produced with and for patients.

Please let us know:

- If you have any accessibility needs; this includes needing a hearing loop or wanting someone to come with you to your appointment.
- If you need an interpreter.
- If you need this information in another format (such as Braille, audio, large print or Easy Read).

You can let us know this by:

- Visiting the Trust web site (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/ais>).
- Calling the number at the top of your appointment letter.
- Adding this information to the Patient Portal (<https://pp.ekhuft.nhs.uk/login>).
- Telling a member of staff at your next appointment.

Any complaints, comments, concerns or compliments, please speak to a member of your healthcare team. Or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service on 01227 783145 or email (ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net).

Patients should not bring large sums of money or valuables into hospital. Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property has been handed into Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Further patient information leaflets are available via the East Kent Hospitals' web site (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patient-information>).

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