

Heart Murmurs

What is a Heart Murmur?

All babies have their heart examined as part of the newborn examination. This is done so that babies who have a problem can be diagnosed and treated as early as possible. Your baby has been found to have a heart murmur which is a noise made by blood as it passes through the heart. It can be heard using a stethoscope. In some babies it may not be there all the time – it may come and go. Most babies with a murmur do not have a heart problem, but we need to look into things a bit more closely. Some murmurs are normal (called 'innocent murmurs') and are often heard in newborn babies. Others may be the first sign that there is a problem with the heart.

The purpose of this leaflet is to give you some information about heart murmurs in newborn babies.

What Does It Mean For My Baby?

Once a murmur has been heard it is important to examine your baby to check that the heart is otherwise normal. If the Paediatrician or midwife examining your baby is happy that he or she has no other problems, they will arrange to listen to the heart again before you take your baby home. Often the murmur will have gone by then and nothing more will need to be done.

If your baby is unwell, or if the murmur is still there when you are ready to take your baby home, he/she may need to have further tests including a heart scan. Depending on the results of these tests your baby will be discharged home without any further follow-up, given an appointment to be seen in our clinic in about 6 weeks or referred to a heart specialist. If a heart problem is diagnosed, we will give you more information at that time about what it means for your baby.

What Are The Things I Should Look Out For When I Take My Baby Home?

You should seek advice from a Midwife, Health Visitor or GP if your baby:

- Looks blue or pale
- Has difficulty with his or her breathing
- Is finding it difficult to feed or is breathless or sweaty during feeds.

This leaflet can be made available in different formats on request. If you would like to make any suggestions or comments about the content of this leaflet, then please contact the Patient Experience Team on 0151 702 4353 or by email at pals@lwh.nhs.uk

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