

## Parent/Carer advice sheet

### Heart murmur in newborn babies : Information for parents

Congratulations on the birth of your new baby!

As you know, the midwife or paediatric doctor has heard a heart murmur during your baby's routine new-born physical examination.

Most murmurs will disappear as the baby grows, and are "innocent". However some murmurs may indicate a problem with blood flow through baby's heart. This advice sheet is designed to explain murmurs, help you to look out for any worrying signs and know when to seek help.

#### What is a heart murmur?

A heart murmur is an extra noise in addition to normal heart sounds heard with a stethoscope as blood passes through valves and blood vessels of the heart. This is common in the first few days of life as the baby's blood circulation adapts to being separated from the placenta.

#### Does a heart murmur mean there is definitely a heart problem?

No. Most babies with heart murmurs have completely normal hearts. These babies have "innocent" heart murmurs. However, sometimes a heart murmur can be a sign that there is a problem with the heart like a small hole or a narrowing and this is why all babies with heart murmurs are reviewed by a member of the senior medical team.

#### How will I know if my baby has a heart problem?

Your baby will be seen at 6 week baby check, routine for all babies. At this time, the GP will listen to baby's heart and see if the murmur persists. We have also arranged for baby to be seen in clinic with a paediatrician in the next few months. If the murmur is still there, they will do some extra tests and may do an echocardiogram (an ultrasound check of baby's heart).

#### What should I look out for?

Most babies with heart murmurs remain well. But if your baby becomes unwell they should be seen urgently by a doctor.

Signs to look out for include:

- breathing difficulties
- becoming pale, clammy, or sweaty
- poor feeding due to breathlessness
- lips and tongue becoming blue instead of the normal pink

#### What should I do if my baby becomes unwell?

You should seek medical advice. Either see your GP or attend the Emergency Department urgently.

#### Points to remember

- A heart murmur is an extra noise heard when listening with a stethoscope.
- Most babies with heart murmurs have completely normal hearts.

- A heart murmur can sometimes be a sign of an underlying heart problem.
- **IF YOUR BABY BECOMES UNWELL PLEASE SEEK URGENT MEDICAL ADVICE.**

### How can I help reduce healthcare associated infections?

Infection prevention and control is important to the well-being of our patients and for that reason we have infection prevention and control procedures in place. Keeping your hands clean is an effective way of preventing the spread of infections. We ask that you, and anyone visiting you, use the hand sanitiser available at the entrance to every ward before coming in to and after leaving the ward. In some situations hands may need to be washed at the sink using soap and water rather than using the hand sanitiser as hand sanitisers are not suitable for use when dealing with patients who have symptoms of diarrhoea.

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### Patient Advice Sheet

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### Legal Notice

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Approvals:  
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CAP –