Hearing Screening and Congenital CMV

For further information about this service contact:

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If you require this information in a different format such as in large print or on audio tape, or in a different language please contact the service on the details above.

If you have any compliments about this service or suggestions for improvements, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service on 0300 131 1000 (charges may apply depending on your network) or email: ccs-tr.pals@nhs.net.

For free, confidential health advice and information 24 hours a day, 365 days a year please contact NHS 111.

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Website: www.cambscommunityservices.nhs.uk

Code No: 0603
Date of Production: June 2019 (v1)
Date of Review: June 2022

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Is there a problem with my baby’s hearing?
Your baby did not have a clear response on their hearing screen and has been referred for a formal hearing test. The formal test may show there is nothing wrong with your baby’s hearing, but it might show that they have a hearing loss.

Although there are many causes for hearing loss in babies, one possible cause is congenital CMV. It is best to diagnose congenital CMV early, so we will ask you to consent for your baby to be tested.

What is Congenital CMV?
- Cytomegalovirus (CMV) is a common virus what can cause symptoms similar to a cold in adults. However, CMV can sometimes cause more significant symptoms if a baby is exposed to it before they are born. This is called Congenital CMV.
- Most babies who have Congenital CMV are well with no signs of the infection. However, it can cause hearing problems in babies who are otherwise well.

Why is it important to test babies for Congenital CMV?
- Congenital CMV causes up to 25% permanent hearing loss in young children.
- Babies need to be diagnosed and assessed within the first few weeks of life.
- More information about Congenital CMV please visit www.cmvaction.org.uk

What does the CMV test involve?
- A small swab (similar to a cotton bud) will be placed gently in your baby’s mouth against the cheek to collect saliva.
- A urine sample will also be collected.
- These will then be sent to a specialist laboratory to test for the virus. The neonatal team will arrange these for your baby.

Can you treat Congenital CMV?
- Doctors have been treating older patients who have CMV with anti-viral medicines for many years.
- Research studies show that these medicines can also help some babies with congenital CMV. In some cases, the medicine can stop hearing loss getting worse or may even improve it.
- At the moment we believe the medicine needs to be given early (by 4 weeks of age).

What happens next?
If your baby does NOT have Congenital CMV;
- If the test is negative, the neonatal team will send you a letter telling you your baby does NOT have Congenital CMV.
- You will still need to bring your baby for a formal hearing test as they did not have a clear response on their hearing screen.

If your baby DOES have Congenital CMV;
The neonatal team will contact you by telephone to arrange appointments - a formal hearing test and a medical review to find out if your baby has any symptoms of Congenital CMV. These will be arranged as soon as possible so treatment can be started early if it is needed. The paediatrician will discuss the treatment options with you.

Your baby will have a formal hearing test as they did not have a clear response on their hearing screening
Your baby will be offered follow-up in clinic including regular hearing tests. Most babies with Congenital CMV have no health problems.