

# Heart Murmurs in Babies

## Child Health Information

All babies have a physical 'baby check' within the first few days of life. Part of this is to check that your baby's heart. Some babies are found to have a heart murmur which will need further checks in the next few weeks. The doctor or midwife will discuss this with you in person but this leaflet is a reminder of the information.



### What is a murmur?

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A heart murmur is an extra noise which is heard alongside the heartbeat when the heart is listened to with a stethoscope.

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

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A heart murmur can **sometimes** be a sign that there is a problem with the heart such as a small hole or a narrowing, but this isn't always the case. Most babies who are found to have heart murmurs have completely normal hearts. These babies have what are known as 'innocent' or 'normal' heart murmurs.

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

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Your baby will be seen in clinic within 2-6 weeks of the murmur being detected. Many murmurs will have disappeared by that time. If the murmur can still be heard and the doctor is not sure that it is an 'innocent' or 'normal' heart murmur then your baby will be referred to a heart specialist who may do further tests. These will be carried out either here at the RUH or the Children's Hospital in Bristol.

Please contact your GP or call the appointment centre at the RUH on 01225 821824 if you have not received the clinic appointment within 6 weeks.

## What should I look out for?

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Babies with heart murmurs usually remain well but very rarely can become unwell in the first weeks of life. If your baby displays any of the following symptoms, they may need to be seen urgently by a doctor.

Signs to look out for include:

- Blue colour of skin and lips
- Breathing difficulties
- Breathless or sweaty when feeding
- Poor feeding or poor weight gain
- Skin which appears blotchy or has a mottled pattern.

**If you are very worried about your baby dial 999 for an ambulance.**

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

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If your baby develops any of the problems listed above whilst waiting to be seen in the paediatric clinic, please ring our Children's ward at the RUH on 01225 824421. Explain that your baby has a heart murmur and has become unwell.

## Newborn Heart murmurs: Points to remember

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- A heart murmur can sometimes be a sign of an underlying heart problem but is not always.
- Most babies with heart murmurs have completely normal hearts.
- **If your baby becomes unwell seek urgent medical advice.**

## Further Information

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Your GP, hospital doctor, midwife, or health visitor will be happy to give further advice.

### **For general advice and information:**

NHS Choices website –'Birth to Five' has more general information about the care of newborn babies: [www.nhs.uk/planners/birthtofive/](http://www.nhs.uk/planners/birthtofive/)

### **For information about children's heart conditions:**

The Children's Heart Federation Charity UK

Free phone 0808 808 5000

[www.chfed.org.uk/how-we-help/information-service/heart-conditions/](http://www.chfed.org.uk/how-we-help/information-service/heart-conditions/)