Screening tests
for your baby

Important information for you to keep safe. Please have it with you for all appointments (including hospital stays) so you can discuss your screening choices.
Be sure you understand the purpose of all the tests before you take them. Don't be afraid to ask.

**Pre-conception**

- Commence folic acid

**Blood for Sickle Cell & Thalassaemia**

**Blood for early Down's syndrome test**

**Antenatal**

Blood for haemoglobin, group, rhesus & antibodies, as early as possible, or as soon as a woman arrives for care, including labour

**Read pre-screening information as soon as possible**

- Dating scan
- Nuchal Translucency scan
- Detailed ultrasound anomaly scan

**Contents**

- Using this booklet
- Newborn and 6-8 week Infant Physical Examinations
- Newborn Blood Spot Screening for your Baby
- Your Baby's Hearing Screening Test
- Notes
Newborn

Blood for syphilis, Hepatitis B, HIV & Rubella immunity as early as possible, or as soon as a woman arrives for care, including labour.

Blood for later Down's syndrome test

Repeat haemoglobin & antibodies

Physical Examination by 72 hours

Physical Examination by 8 weeks

Read & discuss newborn screening information

Newborn Blood spot

Newborn Hearing Screen

Screening Timeline; optimum times for testing
In the busy time after the baby is born remember to look after your own health too.
Make sure you are up to date with cervical screening.

If 25 or over go for cervical screening 3 months post delivery

Contacts

Your midwife's contact details
Name:
Address:

Phone number:

Your doctor's contact details
Name:
Address:

Phone number:
Using this booklet

It would be really helpful if you have this booklet handy when you see health professionals either at home or in hospital.

This booklet is about the screening tests you will be offered for your baby in the first few weeks after birth. It follows on from the booklet about tests during pregnancy.

It is important you understand the purpose and possible results of the screening tests before you make your decisions on which tests to accept. To help you the UK National Screening Committee (the organisation that advises the Department of Health on all aspects of screening) has produced this booklet, explaining the screening tests in detail. It is based on the most recent health research and guidance available.

Please read this booklet as it will help prepare you for discussions with your midwife, doctor, health visitor or screener about the tests, so you can ask the questions that are important to you. Towards the end of your pregnancy and after your baby is born one or more of these health professionals will discuss with you the screening tests recommended for newborn babies. To support those discussions, it would be really helpful if you have the booklet handy when you see health professionals, either at home or in hospital. If you have any questions while reading why not jot them down in the notes section to remind you later.

We hope you will find this booklet useful so please keep it safe, perhaps with your baby’s personal child health record (sometimes known as the ‘red book’).
An introduction to the newborn and 6-8 week infant physical examinations

What is the physical examination?
When your baby is born the midwife will complete some initial checks. You will then be offered a more detailed physical examination of your baby within 72 hours of birth and again at 6-8 weeks old. These include a screening examination to find those babies who may have a problem with their eyes, heart, and hips and, in boys, testes. Your baby will experience a lot of physical changes in the first two months of life and this is why the examination is repeated at 6-8 weeks.

This leaflet provides you with information about:
• why the physical examinations are carried out
• who will carry them out
• where the examinations will be carried out
• how the examinations are carried out
• how to prepare for the examinations
• what the results may mean for parents and babies
• what happens after the examinations
• where the results will be recorded
• where you can go for further information and advice.

Why should I have my baby examined?
The purpose of screening is to identify babies more likely to have conditions that need further investigation. However, screening will not always pick up every
problem. Some conditions may only become apparent after several weeks or months and a few may still not be detected at the 6-8 week check.

The newborn and 6-8 week infant physical examinations can help identify health concerns at an early stage. Most babies who have the physical examinations will be healthy and will not have any health problems. In some instances initial findings may suggest a problem, but further investigations often show there is nothing to be concerned about. Most of the problems experienced by babies are minor and do not need treatment.

Health professionals such as GPs, midwives or health visitors are happy to see parents who may have worries about the health and development of their babies.

For the small number of babies who do have a significant problem, there are considerable benefits to having this identified as soon as possible. Early treatment can improve the health of the baby and prevent disability. If further investigation or treatment is needed, an appointment with a specialist will be arranged.

It is recommended that you have your baby examined but if you are unsure about whether to have the examination you should discuss it with your midwife or other health professional. Also if you think your baby might not have been examined, speak to your midwife, health visitor or GP.

**Who will do the examinations?**

A doctor, midwife, health visitor or a nurse will carry out the examinations. All health professionals carrying out the examination have been specially trained.

**Where will the examinations be carried out?**

Depending on the health professional doing the examination and the age of the infant, the examinations may take place in a hospital, GP surgery, clinic, children’s centre or at home.
How are the examinations carried out?

The health professional will introduce themselves and explain the examination. They will ask you about your pregnancy, your baby's birth, and will check your family history. They will also ask you about your own health and how you are feeling. This is an opportunity for you to talk about the general care of your baby and aspects such as feeding, crying or sleeping and to discuss anything that might be worrying you.

The examinations are normally done when your baby is calm and comfortable. The health professional will carry out an overall physical examination which includes a head to toe examination of your baby looking at their development, feeding, weight, alertness and general well being.

The health professional will look at your baby's
- eyes,
- heart,
- hips and, in boys, his testes. They will listen to your baby's heart with a stethoscope and will look at your baby's eyes using an ophthalmoscope.

Other parts of the examination involve gently handling your baby and moving their legs to check the hips. This should not hurt although testing your baby's hips can sometimes be a little uncomfortable. If necessary, you can comfort your baby during and after the examination.

How can I prepare for the examinations?

You will be with your baby during the examination but you do not need to prepare anything special. Your baby will need to be undressed for part of the examination, but will be kept warm.
For the 6-8 week examination it will be useful for you to think about the growth and development checklist in your baby's personal child health record (sometimes known as the 'red book') before talking with your health visitor or doctor.

The checklist asks you to think about a number of questions and discuss them at the 6-8 week examination.

The checklist asks you to think about the following questions:

- Do you feel well yourself?
- Do you have any worries about feeding your baby?
- Do you have any concerns about your baby's weight gain?
- Does your baby watch your face and follow with his/her eyes?
- Does your baby turn towards the light?
- Does your baby smile at you?
- Do you think your baby can hear you?
- Is your baby startled by loud noises?
- Are there any problems in looking after your baby?
- Do you have any worries about your baby?

What the results may mean for parents and babies

This leaflet contains general information about conditions that may be found by the screening examination. It is not possible to go into detail here about further referrals or treatments. If there is a problem, what happens next will depend on what has been found during the examination and the health professional will be able to discuss this with the parent. Most babies will benefit from the treatments available.