Screening for Critical Congenital Heart Disease (CCHD)

What is congenital heart disease (CHD)?

- CHD is a problem in the heart or its major blood vessels.
- It is the most common birth defect.
- Some forms of CHD are critical. These can cause a baby to become sick soon after birth.

How do we check for CHD before your baby goes home?

- We listen for a sound in the baby's heart called a heart murmur.
- We look for heart rate, breathing, or blood pressure readings that are not normal.
- We do a **pulse oximetry** [ox-EH-mah-tree] **test** to check for low oxygen levels.

What is pulse oximetry?

- It is sometimes called a "pulse ox."
- It is a simple, painless test that measures how much oxygen is in the blood.
  - We will place a sticky strip, like a bandage, on your baby's hand and foot. A small red light on the strip measures your baby's oxygen level.
  - This will only be on your baby's skin for a few minutes.
  - **It will not hurt your baby.**

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Why should my baby have a pulse oximetry test?

- To screen for low oxygen
  - Low oxygen can be a sign of CCHD.
  - **If** your baby has CCHD, this test **may** tell us **before** your baby becomes sick.
- Low oxygen may also happen if:
  - Your baby's lungs and heart are adjusting after birth or
  - Your baby has a lung problem

What is a normal pulse oximetry result?

- A normal reading is **95 to 100 percent with no more than a 3-point difference between hand and foot readings.**
- A baby with CCHD can have a normal reading.

Your baby should go to all well-baby appointments with his or her doctor.

What happens if my baby has low oxygen?

- We may consult with another doctor, or we may order more tests.
  - The most common test is called an echocardiogram (echo). This is an ultrasound of the heart to look at your baby's heart and blood flow.
  - **It will not hurt your baby.**

When will I get the results and what if I have questions?

- The results will be reviewed with you before your baby leaves the hospital.
- If you have questions, talk to the doctor or nurse caring for your baby.