

Stead Family Children's Hospital

Screening for Critical Congenital Heart Disease (CCHD)

What is congenital heart disease (CHD)?

- CHD is a problem with how the heart forms before birth. It affects how blood flows through the heart.
- It is the most common birth defect.
- Some forms of CHD are critical or very serious. 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 your baby's heart called a heart murmur.
 - A heart murmur is a whooshing or swishing sound.
 - The sound is made by blood moving through the heart or blood vessels near the heart.
- We check your baby's:
 - Heart rate (how slow or fast their heart is beating)
 - Breathing
 - Blood pressure
- We do a **pulse oximetry test** to check for low oxygen levels.

What is pulse oximetry?

- It is sometimes called a "pulse ox."
- It is a test that measures how much oxygen is in your baby's 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 check your baby for low oxygen levels
 - 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 a 3-point or less difference between hand and foot readings.**
 - If your baby's hand reading is 100%, we want their foot reading to be 97 to 100%.
- A baby with CCHD can have a normal reading.

Your baby should go to all well-baby visits with their doctor.

What happens if my baby has low oxygen levels?

We may talk 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 of the echo? 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.