

# Newborn Heart Murmurs

**Children's Services**  
**Women and Children's Services**

This leaflet has been designed to give you important information about your condition / procedure, and to answer some common queries that you may have.



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# Information for patients and visitors

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## Introduction

Congratulations on the birth of your newborn.

Your baby has just had a detailed newborn examination and was found to have a heart murmur when the heart was listened to with a stethoscope.

Many parents are understandably worried and upset when they are told their newborn baby has a heart murmur. We hope this leaflet will help address some of your concerns.

## What is a heart murmur?

A heart murmur describes an extra sound that can be heard in addition to the normal beats and can only be heard using a stethoscope. The sounds are made by the blood flowing through the heart. Heart murmurs are common in the newborn period.

## Does a heart murmur mean my child has a heart problem?

The term heart murmur is not a diagnosis of an illness or disorder. Although a small number of murmurs can sometimes be a sign that there is a problem with the heart, the majority of babies never have a heart problem.

## What happens next?

If the doctor, neonatal practitioner or midwife who examined your baby feels that your baby requires immediate attention they will remain in hospital. They may either remain with you on the maternity ward or transferred to the Neonatal Unit with the reasons for this and a plan of care explained to you.

If your baby is otherwise well, they will be discharged home with you but will be seen in

the paediatric outpatient clinic within 3 weeks.

If at the outpatient appointment the murmur is no longer heard, they will be discharged back to your general practitioner (GP).

If a murmur is still present we will arrange for your baby to have a heart ultrasound scan called echocardiogram. This may be carried out on the same day or you may be given an appointment to come back on a different day.

## What is an echocardiogram?

An echocardiogram is a similar sort of scan to those used during pregnancy. It is painless and looks at the structures of the heart and how well it is functioning.

## When I go home, should I watch out for anything?

Most babies discharged home with a murmur will remain well. However we ask that you pay particular attention to the following:

- Breathlessness – is your baby too breathless to feed?
- sweaty when feeding
- poor feeding
- blue colour of hands, feet and lips or the skin becoming mottled (red in some places and pale in others)

Although these symptoms do not necessarily mean there is a heart problem, urgent medical advice should be sought as it may be a sign of other problems unrelated to the heart murmur.



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### What should I do if I have any concern before my clinic appointment?

You can seek medical advice from:

- Your GP
- NHS Direct – Telephone “111”  
[www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)
- Attend the nearest Accident & Emergency Department
- Dial “999” for an ambulance

If you need to seek medical advice it is helpful if you tell them that your baby has been identified as having a heart murmur.

### Why is it beneficial to detect a heart murmur early?

As with all conditions, the earlier a heart problem is identified, the sooner investigations and if necessary treatment can start.

### What are the risks of having a heart murmur?

A heart murmur is used as a screening aid to identify a serious heart problem. However the absence of a heart murmur does not exclude a heart problem.

### Are there alternative treatments?

There are no alternatives all babies born in our hospital must have their hearts listened to during the first examination. If a heart murmur is still heard during the outpatient appointment, an echocardiogram can help doctors decide on the plan of care / treatment for your baby.

If you have any concerns please do not hesitate to speak to a doctor or a member of nursing / midwifery staff.

### Contact details within the Trust for patients to obtain additional information

Rainforest Ward, Diana Princess of Wales Hospital, Grimsby

Tele: 01472 874111 extension 7520

Children’s Services Community Nursing Team - Grimsby

Tele: 01472 874111 extension 7559

Disney Ward, Scunthorpe General Hospital, Scunthorpe

Tele: 01724 290139

Children’s Services Community Nursing Team - Scunthorpe

Tele: 01724 282282 extension 2425

### References

Northern Lincolnshire & Goole NHS Foundation Trust Guideline for Treatment of Heart Murmurs in the Newborn



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## Concerns and Queries

If you have any concerns / queries about any of the services offered by the Trust, in the first instance, please speak to the person providing your care.

### For Diana, Princess of Wales Hospital

Alternatively you can contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on (01472) 875403 or at the PALS office which is situated near the main entrance.

### For Scunthorpe General Hospital

Alternatively you can contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on (01724) 290132 or at the PALS office which is situated on C Floor.

Alternatively you can email:  
[nlg-tr.PALS@nhs.net](mailto:nlg-tr.PALS@nhs.net)

## Confidentiality

Information on NHS patients is collected in a variety of ways and for a variety of reasons (e.g. providing care and treatment, managing and planning the NHS, training and educating staff, research etc.).

Everyone working for the NHS has a legal duty to keep information about you confidential. Information will only ever be shared with people who have a genuine need for it (e.g. your GP or other professionals from whom you have been receiving care) or if the law requires it, for example, to notify a birth.

Please be assured however that anyone who receives information from us is also under a legal duty to keep it confidential.

## Zero Tolerance - Violent, Threatening and Abusive Behaviour

The Trust and its staff are committed to providing high quality care to patients within the department. However, we wish to advise all patients / visitors that the following inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated:

- Swearing
- Threatening / abusive behaviour
- Verbal / physical abuse

The Trust reserves the right to withdraw from treating patients whom are threatening / abusive / violent and ensuring the removal of those persons from the premises.

All acts of criminal violence and aggression will be notified to the Police immediately.

## Risk Management Strategy

The Trust welcomes comments and suggestions from patients and visitors that could help to reduce risk.

Perhaps you have experienced something whilst in hospital, whilst attending as an outpatient or as a visitor and you felt at risk.

Please tell a member of staff on the ward or in the department you are attending / visiting.

## Moving & Handling

The Trust operates a Minimal Lifting Policy, which in essence means patients are only ever lifted by nursing staff in an emergency situation.

Patients are always encouraged to help themselves as much as possible when mobilising, and if unable to do so, equipment may be used to assist in their safe transfer.

If you have any questions regarding moving and handling of patients within the Trust,



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please speak to a member of staff in the ward or department you are visiting.

**Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS  
Foundation Trust**

**Diana Princess of Wales Hospital  
Scartho Road  
Grimsby  
01472 874111**

**Scunthorpe General Hospital  
Cliff Gardens  
Scunthorpe  
01724 282282**

**Goole & District Hospital  
Woodland Avenue  
Goole  
01405 720720**

[www.nlg.nhs.uk](http://www.nlg.nhs.uk)

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