

Hearing Screening & Congenital Cytomegalovirus (cCMV)

Your Questions Answered



What does the CMV test involve?

A small swab (similar to a cotton bud) will be placed gently in your baby's mouth against the cheek to collect saliva. This will then be sent to a specialist laboratory to test for the virus.

Up to 25% of permanent hearing loss in young children in the UK is thought to be caused by Congenital CMV.

What is congenital CMV?

Human cytomegalovirus (CMV) is a common virus which can cause symptoms similar to a cold in adults. However, CMV can sometimes cause more significant symptoms if a baby is exposed to it before they are born. This is called congenital CMV. In particular infection can cause hearing problems in babies who are otherwise well.

Is there a problem with my baby's hearing?

Your baby did not have a clear response on their hearing screen and has been referred for a formal hearing test. This test may show there is nothing wrong with your baby's hearing, but it might show that they have a hearing loss.

Although there are many causes for hearing loss in babies, one possible cause is congenital CMV. It is best to diagnose congenital CMV early in order to guide you best, so we will ask you to consent for your baby to be tested

Can you treat congenital CMV infection?

Doctors have been treating older patients who have CMV with anti-viral medicines for many years.

Research studies show that these medicines can also help some babies with congenital CMV. In some cases, the medicine can stop hearing loss getting worse.

At the moment we believe the medicine needs to be given early to be effective within the first few weeks of life.

What if the test for CMV is **NEGATIVE** in my baby?

Your Audiology team will tell you the results. If the test is **NEGATIVE**, your baby probably does not have congenital CMV. Your baby still needs a further hearing test as they did not have a clear response on their hearing screen. If this second hearing test still shows a hearing loss, we will retest for CMV at that point.



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What if the test for CMV is POSITIVE in my baby?

If the test is positive, your baby may have congenital CMV. Sometimes your baby can test positive, but they do NOT have congenital CMV. We always recheck your babies CMV result from both a urine sample and another saliva swab. The hospital will contact you by telephone to arrange a Paediatric review to find out if your baby has any features of congenital CMV. These will be arranged as soon as possible so that your Paediatrician can discuss treatment options with you if appropriate. Your baby will be offered follow-up in clinic including regular hearing tests.

Why is testing my baby for congenital CMV important?

- Up to 25% of permanent hearing loss in young children is caused by Congenital CMV infection.
- It is best for babies to be diagnosed and assessed within the first few weeks of life.
- For more information about congenital CMV please visit <http://cmvaction.org.uk/>
- **It is important to remember that most babies with congenital CMV infection have no health problems**

Parent Information Leaflet: cCMV
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Acknowledgment: We are grateful for the consent to adapt the form used by our colleagues in Norfolk and Norwich for local use.

The Trust cannot accept any responsibility for the accuracy of the information given if the leaflet is not used by Royal Devon staff undertaking procedures at the Royal Devon hospitals.

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