

Critical Congenital Heart Disease (CCHD) Screening

This screening is a bedside test completed in hospitals and communities in Ontario in order to identify babies with critical congenital heart disease (CCHD). Although most newborns do not have a heart problem, early identification and treatment is vital in helping those who do.

What Is CCHD?

Congenital Heart Disease is a condition that occurs when a baby's heart or major blood vessels have not formed properly. "Critical" congenital heart disease (CCHD) often requires surgery or intervention in the first year of life.

Why Screen for CCHD?

Some babies with CCHD are not identified by prenatal ultrasounds or by physical examination after birth, and can appear to be healthy (no symptoms). These babies are at risk for having serious complications within the first few days or weeks of life and require emergency care.

How Do You Screen for CCHD?

CCHD screening is a **safe, quick and painless** test that can detect low oxygen levels, a common sign of CCHD. The monitor that is used is placed like a Band-Aid or sticker on your baby. The test is done at 24 to 48 hours after birth and takes only a few minutes to complete. The results are available immediately.

Can CCHD Be Missed with Screening?

CCHD screening can identify babies with low oxygen levels, which can be a sign of CCHD, but it may not detect all heart problems.

What If My Baby Has a Positive Screen Result?

A positive screen result does not mean your baby has CCHD, but further evaluation is needed to determine the cause of low oxygen levels. Immediate examination by a physician is important to ensure the best health outcome for your baby. If your healthcare providers are concerned about your baby's screening results, they will order more tests, such as an ultrasound of the heart (echocardiogram). Once identified, babies with CCHD can be seen by cardiologists and receive specialized care and treatment, helping them grow and develop normally. If you have any questions about your baby's health, please discuss them with your baby's healthcare provider. A healthy start leads to a healthier life.

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