

Screening for babies at risk of Developmental Dysplasia of the Hip (DDH)

Patient information factsheet

Congratulations on the birth of your baby!

Your baby's head-to-toe check shows that they may have a higher risk of a hip condition called Developmental Dysplasia of the Hip (DDH).

What is DDH?

- DDH is a problem (abnormality) with the hip joint that some babies are born with.
- The hip socket is too shallow, so the leg bone (femur) doesn't stay in place properly.
- This makes the hip unstable, and the leg bone can slip out completely. This is called a dislocation.

DDH happens in about 1 in 1,000 babies. Doctors don't fully know why it occurs, but it can run in families.

Risk factors for DDH include:

- A parent or sibling who has had DDH.
- Baby having been in breech position after 36 weeks (feet or bottom downward).
- Baby being born after 28 weeks in a breech position.
- Twins or multiple pregnancies where at least one baby was in breech position.

How is a potential hip problem identified?

- All babies are examined within 72 hours, including checking their hips.
- Some hip problems may not show up at this first check.
- A second check is done by your GP at 6 to 8 weeks.
- It is important to register your baby with your GP for this check.
- If your baby has risk factors for DDH, we strongly recommend an ultrasound scan at 4 to 6 weeks old. This follows national NHS Guidance.
- The scan is advised even if the physical hip examination looks normal.
- **Please do not miss your baby's ultrasound appointment.**
- **It is important that your baby is scanned at the right time.**
- **A late diagnosis of DDH may require hip surgery and lead to hip problems for your child in the future.**

Your baby's ultrasound scan

- If your baby's hip ultrasound is at Whittington Hospital, you will get a text and a letter with the appointment details.
- **If you do not get an appointment within two weeks of your baby leaving the hospital, call the Imaging Department at 0207 288 5888 (9am to 3pm).**

What your baby's ultrasound can find

- If the **ultrasound scan is normal** there is no need for any further follow-up.
- If the **ultrasound shows a hip abnormality**, your baby will be referred to the Paediatric Orthopaedic Team for further care.
- The **ultrasound scan might show your baby has 'immature hips'**. This means the hip socket is shallow (small), is not yet fully developed and is a risk for hip dislocating. If this occurs, a repeat ultrasound scan is recommended two weeks after the first scan, to recheck your baby's hips.
- If the hip joints are still not mature on the repeat scan, your baby will be referred to the Paediatric Orthopaedic Team.
- If the hips are normal on the repeat scan, then no further follow-up is necessary.

Contact our service

If you have any further questions, please call us on 020 7288 5108 or 020 7288 5954 (both Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm).

Contact our Trust

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern, please contact our Patient advice and liaison service (PALS) on **020 7288 5551** or whh-tr.PALS@nhs.net.

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet, please email whh-tr.patient-information@nhs.net. We will try our best to meet your needs.

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