

Tests for your baby if you have TSH receptor antibodies

Information for children, families and carers

We have given you this factsheet because your baby needs to have some additional tests in the first couple of weeks after they are born to check that their thyroid is working properly. It explains why your baby needs these tests and what the tests will involve, so you know what to expect.

We hope this factsheet helps to answer some of the questions you may have. If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact us using the details at the end of this factsheet.

What is the thyroid?

The thyroid is a gland in your neck. It produces important hormones that affect things such as your heart rate and body temperature.

What are TSH receptor antibodies?

Antibodies are proteins in your blood. They are part of your body's natural defence system.

When you are pregnant, antibodies called 'TSH receptor antibodies' (or TrAB) can cross the placenta (a temporary organ that forms in the womb during pregnancy and connects you to your baby) and affect your baby's thyroid.

Why does my baby need additional tests?

We need to check your baby's thyroid is working properly because you have or have previously had a thyroid condition that could affect your baby.

If TSH receptor antibodies have passed from you to your baby during pregnancy, there is a small risk that your baby could develop hyperthyroidism (overactive thyroid) or hypothyroidism (underactive thyroid). This is rare, but it's important to pick it up early if it does happen so that we can treat your baby.

What tests will my baby need to have?

After birth (day 1)

After your baby has been born, we will test a sample of your umbilical cord blood for TSH receptor antibodies.

We will ask you and your baby to stay on the postnatal ward for at least 24 hours after they are born, so that we can monitor their temperature, heart rate, breathing and feeding.

When you and your baby go home from hospital, our neonatal community outreach team will arrange check-up appointments for your baby, either at your home or by telephone.

The first two weeks (days 3 to 5 and days 10 to 14)

Your baby will have some thyroid blood tests at the butterfly clinic in the children's outpatient department at Southampton General Hospital (across the road from Princess Anne Hospital). This is to check if their thyroid is showing signs of under or over activity.

The umbilical cord blood test for TSH receptor antibodies can take around a week to come back.

If the umbilical cord blood test is **negative** for TSH receptor antibodies and your baby's thyroid blood tests are **normal**, your baby will not need to have any further blood tests or appointments.

If the umbilical cord blood test is **positive** for TSH receptor antibodies, we will book your baby in for check-up appointments when they are four weeks old and when they are two to three months old.

If your baby has any symptoms of a thyroid condition, we will repeat their thyroid blood test. They will also have a check-up appointment with a paediatrician (specialist children's doctor).

What symptoms should I look out for?

Contact us or your general practitioner (GP) if:

- your baby is irritable
- your baby is not gaining weight
- your baby is having feeding difficulties
- your baby has diarrhoea
- your baby has an increased appetite
- your baby is flushed
- your baby is sweating
- your baby is breathing fast
- your baby has a swelling on their neck (a goitre)
- your baby has warm, moist skin
- you are worried about your baby

Contact us

If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact us.

Neonatal community outreach team (NCOT)

Telephone: **07766 994816** (Monday to Saturday, 7.30am to 4.30pm)

Woodland ward (special care baby unit)

Telephone: **023 8120 6553** (out of hours)

Useful links

www.uhs.nhs.uk/for-visitors/southampton-childrens-hospital/childrens-services/childrens-outpatient-department/childrens-blood-tests

www.btf-thyroid.org/children

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