

Tests for your baby if you have TSH receptor antibodies

Information for patients, families and carers

We've given you this factsheet because your baby will need to have some blood tests when they are born. These tests are to check that their thyroid is working properly. We need to check this because you have or have previously had a thyroid condition that could affect your baby.

- The **thyroid** is a gland in your neck. It produces important hormones that affect things such as your heart rate and body temperature.
- **Antibodies** are proteins in your blood. They are part of your body's natural defence system.

TSH receptor antibodies

When you are pregnant, antibodies called 'TSH receptor antibodies' (or TrAB) cross the placenta and can stimulate your baby's thyroid. 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.

Your baby's blood tests and observations

- **Tests and observations after birth (Day 1)**

After your baby has been born, we will test a sample of your 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, the neonatal home team will arrange check-up appointments for your baby, either at your home or by telephone.

- **Tests in the first two weeks (Day 3 to 5 and Day 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 cord blood sent for TSH receptor antibodies can take around a week to come back. If the TSH receptor antibody test is negative and the thyroid tests are normal, your baby will not need to have any further blood tests or appointments.

If the TSH receptor antibody test is positive, 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).

Symptoms to look out for

Contact the neonatal home team (telephone: **07766 994816**) or your 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 questions or worries, please contact the neonatal home team on telephone: **07766 994816**.

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