

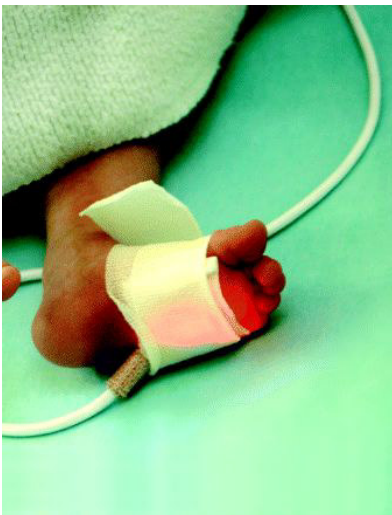
PULSE OXIMETRY SCREENING FOR CONGENITAL HEART DISEASE (CHD)

What is congenital heart disease?

Congenital means present at birth. Congenital heart disease refers to a problem with the heart's structure and function as a result of abnormal development of the heart in the first few weeks of pregnancy. Many types of heart defects exist, most of which either obstruct blood flow in the heart or blood vessels, or cause blood to flow through the heart in an abnormal pattern. Heart defects are one of the most common types of birth defects. Fortunately, many heart defects are treatable and babies born with these heart defects can go on to lead active normal lives, but a baby cannot receive treatment unless someone realises an abnormality is present. Some heart conditions are not clinically obvious and testing the oxygen levels in the blood can be an early indicator that a problem exists.

What is pulse oximetry?

Pulse oximetry is used to monitor the levels of oxygen in the blood. Light sensor probes are secured opposite each other and placed on the baby's hand or foot. The sensors emit beams of red and infra-red light through the tissues. Measurements are then relayed to a computer which displays the results on a digital screen. There is no risk of adverse effects to your baby from pulse oximetry. If your baby's results fall outside of the normal range this may be an indication of a problem with their heart or lungs.



<http://perfectbrokenhearts.wordpress.com/category/chd-research/pulse-ox-testing/>

When will your baby be tested?

Pulse oximetry will be done within 4-24 hours after your baby is born. The saturation monitor will only be left in place for a maximum of 5 minutes.

What will happen if my baby's test falls outside the normal range?

If your baby's pulse oximetry falls outside of the normal range a medical officer will be asked to review and examine your baby. After this review the test may be repeated in a couple of hour's time. If the result continues to fall outside of the normal range the medical team may request further investigations including an echocardiogram (ultrasound of the heart) or chest x-ray.

If you have any further questions please ask the medical and nursing staff.

fact sheet