

## Patient information

# Hearing Screening and Congenital Cytomegalovirus (cCMV)



### What is congenital CMV?

Congenital CMV is a common virus. In the UK about 60% of people have this virus and usually CMV causes flu-like symptoms. However, it can in some cases significantly affect the unborn baby.

When a baby is born with a CMV infection, it is called congenital CMV. Most babies with congenital CMV never show signs or have any health problems. However, some babies have health problems at birth or that develop later, such as hearing loss.

Congenital CMV causes about 25% of permanent deafness in children in the UK and is the leading cause of non-hereditary deafness.

**Babies need to be diagnosed and assessed within the first few weeks of life.**

## **Hearing loss and CMV**

Hearing loss is common in babies with congenital CMV, and even those without symptoms at birth may develop a hearing loss.

Congenital CMV causes sensorineural hearing loss. This type of hearing loss is permanent and can affect one or both ears. The hearing loss can also be progressive (it could get worse over time). For this reason, it is important that children with congenital CMV have their hearing tested on a regular basis. The earlier we can identify a hearing loss, the sooner we can offer help, such as hearing aids, to ensure that your child has access to all the sounds they need to be able to develop their communication, language, and social skills.

### **Is there a problem with my baby's hearing?**

- Your baby did not have a clear response on their hearing screen and has been referred for a formal hearing test. The formal test may show there is nothing wrong with your baby's hearing, but it might show that they have a hearing loss.
- Although there are many causes for hearing loss in babies, one possible cause is congenital CMV. It is best to diagnose congenital CMV early, so we will ask you to consent for your baby to be tested.

### **What does the CMV test involve?**

A PCR saliva swab (similar to a cotton bud) will be placed gently in your baby's mouth against the cheek to collect saliva. This will then be sent to a specialist laboratory to test for the virus.

### **Results**

The results will be returned in a few days - if the virus was not found the hearing screeners will contact you via phone and confirmation letter.

If the virus is found, you will be contacted by and seen in audiology as soon as possible. The paediatricians will discuss further investigations and treatment if required.

If your baby does **not** have congenital CMV:

**You will still need to bring your baby for the audiology test, as they did not have clear responses at the hearing screen.**

## **Treatment**

Treatment for babies affected by congenital CMV will depend on many factors, including whether they have symptoms at birth, how serious these symptoms are, whether there is hearing loss.

Antiviral drugs can be used to treat babies and should be started within the first month of their life.

The main benefit is to preserve hearing and prevent progression of hearing loss associated with congenital CMV. Emerging evidence shows that even when babies have less severe symptoms, treatment can be of benefit.

## **Further information**

Hearing Test - Audiology Department: 01284 713506

For more information about congenital CMV, please visit: <http://cmvaction.org.uk/>



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