tiny tickers
a better start for tiny hearts

Your baby's pulse oximetry test

Information for parents

Your baby will be offered a pulse oximetry test shortly after birth. This test is simple and non-invasive. It uses a light sensor to assess the level of oxygen in the baby's blood and takes a few minutes at no discomfort to your baby.

What is a pulse oximetry test?

A pulse oximetry test measures the oxygen levels in your baby's blood. In most cases, the levels will be fine and no further intervention will be necessary. However, if a low reading is detected, they may need to be retested or see a specialist doctor. A low reading could indicate that your baby may have a heart problem or another potentially serious condition.

Why is this test so important?

Not every baby with congenital heart disease (CHD) will be born visibly displaying signs and symptoms of a poorly heart. Without this machine, serious heart defects could go undetected.

How is the test carried out?

This very simple test involves wrapping a probe around your baby's hand or foot for a couple of minutes and will cause no pain or discomfort to your baby.

Tiny Tickers is a national charity that funds pulse oximetry machines in UK maternity units. Many maternity units do not have the means to introduce these machines, which help save lives. For this reason, Tiny Tickers has donated pulse oximetry testing machines to this maternity unit, so the test can be used as part of standard newborn screening.

Test for Tommy
Help every tiny ticker

Leo's Story

When he was born, Leo seemed perfectly healthy. Before being discharged, he had a pulse oximetry test. The quick, painless test started the chain of events that went on to save his life.

The test showed that Leo's blood oxygen levels were very low. This lead to an immediate referral, where his serious heart condition was diagnosed. **Leo went on to have surgery and is now doing well.**

"The scariest thing is, if he hadn't had the pulse oximetry test, we would have gone home."

- Emma, Leo's mum

The hospital where Leo was born and had his pulse oximetry test received machines from Tiny Tickers as part of our **Test for Tommy** campaign.

Emma believes the test saved Leo's life.

1,000 babies leave UK hospitals every year with an undiagnosed heart defect. A pulse oximetry test can help ensure that your baby isn't one of them.

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