



# **healthwatch**

## **INFORMATION GUIDE**

**Free New-born  
Screenings  
Available in the  
UK**

## In this guide you will find:

- Information on New-born screening tests. These include:
  - Physical Examination
  - Hearing Screening
  - Blood Spot Test
- Information on what each of the screenings involves
- Support available



# New-born Physical Examination

**BABY ON  
BOARD**

## New-born physical examination

All parents are offered a thorough physical examination for their baby within 72 hours of giving birth. This includes screening tests to find out if your baby has any problems with their eyes, heart, hips and in boys, testicles. New-born examination is usually carried out in the hospital before you go home. Sometimes, it can also be done in community clinics, GP surgeries, children centre's or at home. Ideally both parents should be present at the examination.

The health professional doing the examination should explain what it involves. This could be a doctor, midwife, nurse or health visitor who has been trained to do this. The aim is to spot any problems early so treatment can be started as soon as possible. Usually, nothing of concern is found.

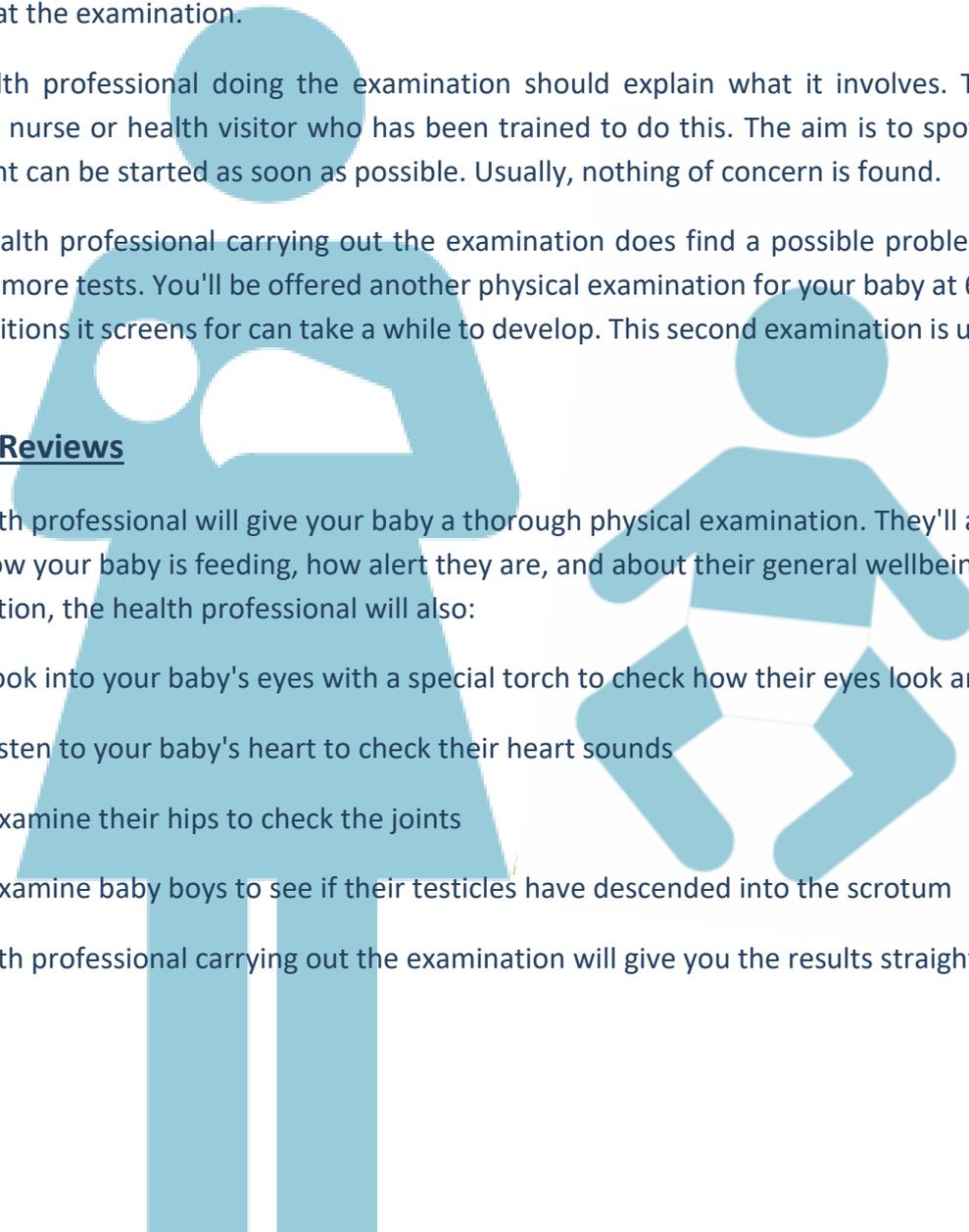
If the health professional carrying out the examination does find a possible problem, they may refer your baby for more tests. You'll be offered another physical examination for your baby at 6 to 8 weeks, as some of the conditions it screens for can take a while to develop. This second examination is usually done at your GP's surgery.

## Health Reviews

The health professional will give your baby a thorough physical examination. They'll also ask you questions about how your baby is feeding, how alert they are, and about their general wellbeing. During the examination, the health professional will also:

- look into your baby's eyes with a special torch to check how their eyes look and move
- listen to your baby's heart to check their heart sounds
- examine their hips to check the joints
- examine baby boys to see if their testicles have descended into the scrotum

The health professional carrying out the examination will give you the results straight away.





# New-born Hearing Screening

**BABY ON BOARD**

## New-born Hearing Screening

This test helps identify babies who have permanent hearing loss as early as possible. This means parents can get support and advice they need right from the start.

One to two babies in every 1,000 are born with permanent hearing loss in one or both ears. Most of these babies are born into families with no history of permanent hearing loss. Permanent hearing loss can significantly affect babies' development. Finding out early can give these babies a better chance of developing language, speech, and communication skills.

If you give birth in hospital, you may be offered this test before you are discharged. Otherwise, it will be done by a health professional, healthcare assistant or health visitor trained to do this, within first few weeks. You will be contacted by your local new-born hearing screening service to arrange an appointment. Ideally, the test should be done within the first 4-5 weeks. If you are NOT offered a test, speak to the health visitor or GP to arrange an appointment.

## Health Reviews

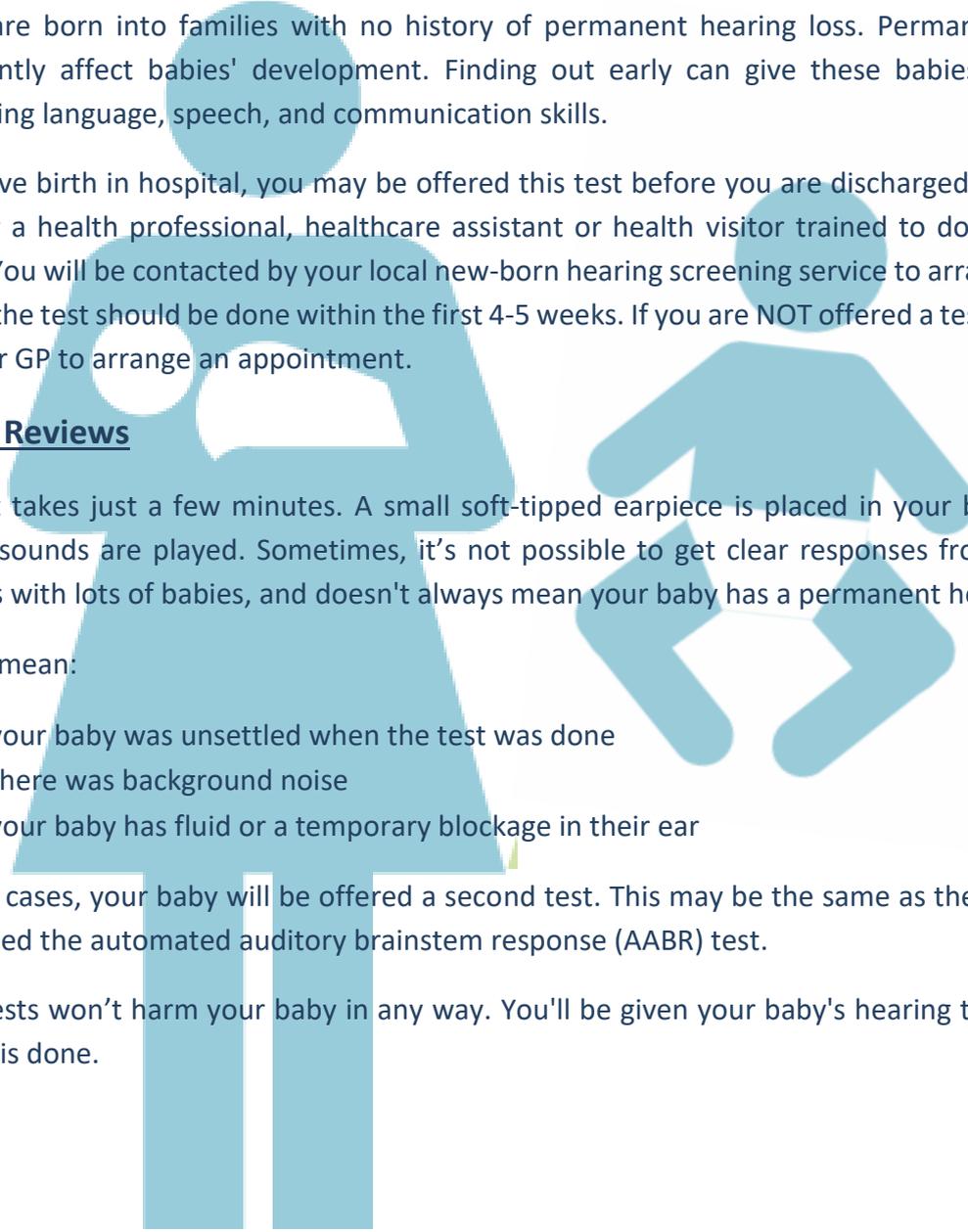
The test takes just a few minutes. A small soft-tipped earpiece is placed in your baby's ear and gentle clicking sounds are played. Sometimes, it's not possible to get clear responses from the first test. This happens with lots of babies, and doesn't always mean your baby has a permanent hearing loss.

It could mean:

- your baby was unsettled when the test was done
- there was background noise
- your baby has fluid or a temporary blockage in their ear

In these cases, your baby will be offered a second test. This may be the same as the first test, or another type called the automated auditory brainstem response (AABR) test.

These tests won't harm your baby in any way. You'll be given your baby's hearing test results as soon as the test is done.





# New-born Blood Spot Test

**BABY ON BOARD**

## New-born Blood Spot Test

Every baby is offered new-born blood spot screening, also known as the heel prick test, ideally when they're 5 days old. New-born blood spot screening involves taking a blood sample to find out if your baby has 1 of 9 rare but serious health conditions:

- Sickle Cell Disease
- Cystic Fibrosis
- Congenital Hypothyroidism
- Inherited Metabolic Diseases
  - phenylketonuria (PKU)
  - medium-chain acyl-CoA dehydrogenase deficiency (MCADD)
  - maple syrup urine disease (MSUD)
  - isovaleric acidaemia (IVA)
  - glutaric aciduria type 1 (GA1)
  - homocystinuria (pyridoxine unresponsive) (HCU)

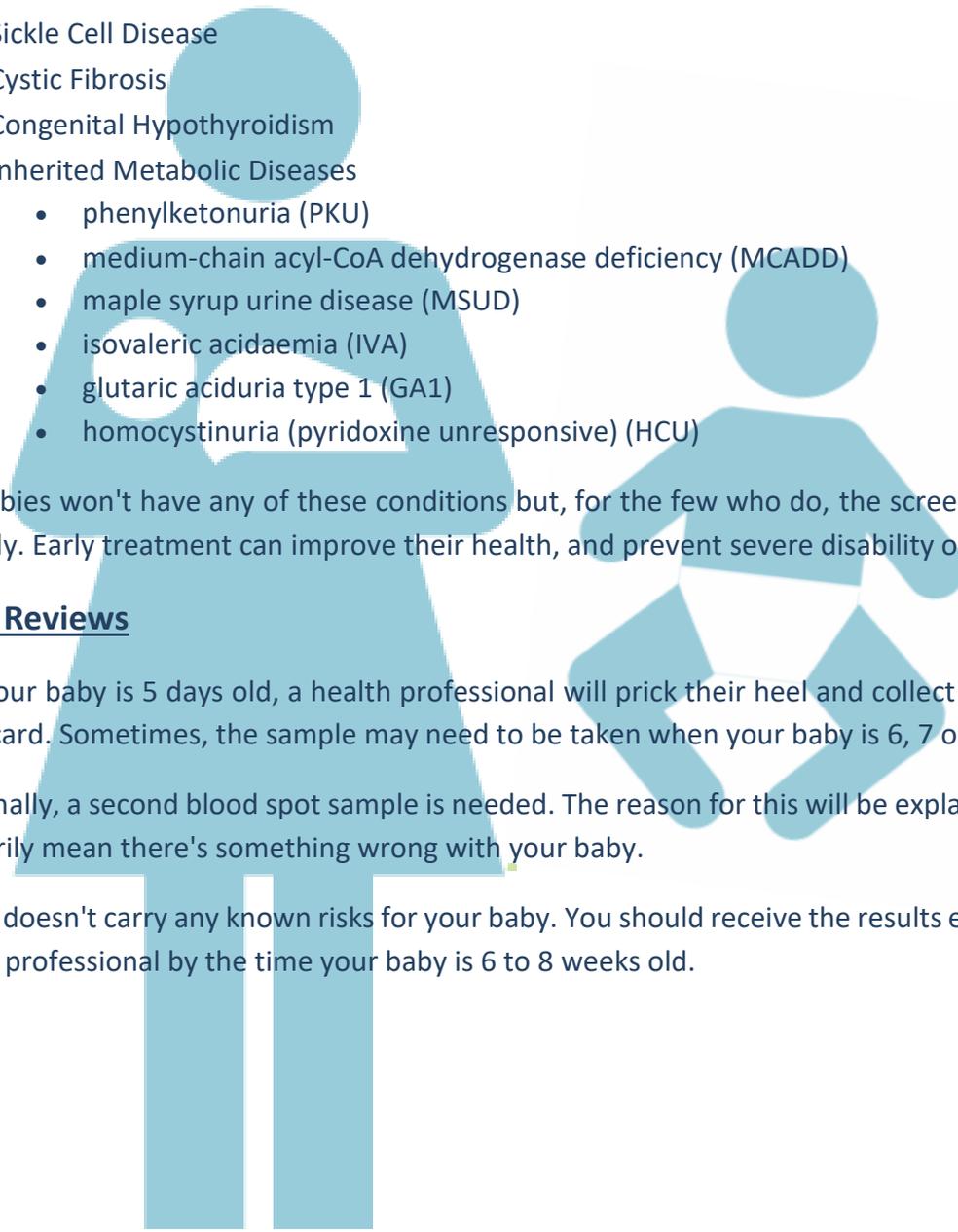
Most babies won't have any of these conditions but, for the few who do, the screening can benefit them massively. Early treatment can improve their health, and prevent severe disability or even death.

## Health Reviews

When your baby is 5 days old, a health professional will prick their heel and collect 4 drops of blood on a special card. Sometimes, the sample may need to be taken when your baby is 6, 7 or 8 days old.

Occasionally, a second blood spot sample is needed. The reason for this will be explained to you. It doesn't necessarily mean there's something wrong with your baby.

The test doesn't carry any known risks for your baby. You should receive the results either by letter or from a health professional by the time your baby is 6 to 8 weeks old.



## **Support Available:**

### **General New-born Support:**

**Neonatal Care:** 01482 674391

**Neonatal Intensive Care Unit:** (01482) 604391/604472

**The Bliss Helpline:** 0808 801 0322

**Bundles of Joy Charity:** [hello@bundlesofjoy.org.uk](mailto:hello@bundlesofjoy.org.uk)

**General new-born information, guidance, help, advice and support:**  
[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

### **Hearing Impairment Support:**

**National Deaf Children Society:** 020 7490 8656

**Action on Hearing Loss:** 0808 808 0123

**Tinnitus Helpline:** 0808 808 6666

**New-born Hearing Screenings – Making Sounds Checklist to download:**  
[www.gov.co.uk](http://www.gov.co.uk)

**New-born Hearing Screenings – Reacting to Sounds Checklist download:**  
[www.gov.co.uk](http://www.gov.co.uk)

If you would like to find out more about free screenings available in the UK visit [www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-screening](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-screening)

OR

Contact your local Healthwatch, contact details can be found below:

**healthwatch**

East Riding of Yorkshire

Phone: 01482 665 684

Email: [enquiries@healthwatcheastridingofyorkshire.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatcheastridingofyorkshire.co.uk)

Website: [www.healthwatcheastridingofyorkshire.co.uk](http://www.healthwatcheastridingofyorkshire.co.uk)

**healthwatch**

Kingston upon Hull

Phone: 01482 595505

Email: [enquiries@healthwatchkingstonuponhull.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatchkingstonuponhull.co.uk)

Website: [www.healthwatchkingstonuponhull.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchkingstonuponhull.co.uk)

**healthwatch**

North East Lincolnshire

Phone: 01472 361 459

Email: [enquiries@healthwatchnortheastlincolnshire.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatchnortheastlincolnshire.co.uk)

Website: [www.healthwatchnortheastlincolnshire.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchnortheastlincolnshire.co.uk)

**healthwatch**

North Lincolnshire

Phone: 01724 844986

Email: [enquiries@healthwatchnorthlincolnshire.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatchnorthlincolnshire.co.uk)

Website: [www.healthwatchnorthlincolnshire.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchnorthlincolnshire.co.uk)



