 

Questions you may have regarding CMV testing for your infant

1. **My baby ‘failed’ his hearing screen, does that mean he/she is deaf?**

No. This is only a screening test. Between 2 and 10 percent of all babies across the United States do not pass their first hearing screen, but very few of these babies have permanent hearing loss. Babies can fail to pass (or “refer”) the newborn hearing screening due to vernix in the ear canal, fluid in the middle ear, or because of movement or crying during the test. However, since a few babies actually do have hearing loss, it is very important that your baby has a follow-up appointment for a confirmatory test.

1. **Why is urine being collected for a failed hearing screen?**

Urine is being collected to test for a virus called CMV (Cytomegalovirus, pronounced sy-toe-MEG-a-low-vy-rus). Congenital CMV infection is one cause of hearing loss in infants. CMV can be diagnosed by testing a newborn baby’s urine or blood. These specimens must be collected for testing within two to three weeks after the baby is born in order to confirm a diagnosis of congenital CMV infection.

1. **What is CMV?**

CMV is a common virus that infects people of all ages. Over half of adults by age 40 have been infected with CMV. Once CMV is in a person’s body, it stays there for life and can reactivate. Most people infected with CMV show no signs or symptoms. The CMV virus can pass from mother to baby and infect the infant before he/she is born.

Most babies with congenital CMV infection never show signs or have health problems. However, some babies may have health problems that are apparent at birth or may develop later during infancy or childhood.

Some babies without signs of congenital CMV infection at birth may have hearing loss. Hearing loss may be present at birth or may develop later.

1. **When will I find out the results of the test?**

It may take up to 2 weeks to for the results to be returned. You will be called by someone on our staff with the results of your infant’s test. If you do not hear from us in 3 weeks please call 609-853-7626.

1. **What if the test is positive for CMV?**

If you infant’s test is positive for CMV we will help arrange follow up with Infectious Disease and hearing specialists at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

Medicines, called antivirals, may decrease the risk of health problems and hearing loss in some infected babies who show signs of congenital CMV infection at birth. Use of antivirals for treating babies with congenital CMV infection who have no signs at birth is not currently recommended.

Babies with congenital CMV infection, with or without signs at birth, should have regular hearing checks.

CMV Testing Parent Question Sheet Handout