

Neonatology

General Movements Assessment (GMA)

Information for parents and carers

Introduction

This information sheet explains an early developmental assessment for your baby. It includes the risks, the benefits and any alternatives. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to speak to a member of the team caring for your child.

What is Prechtl's General Movements Assessment?

Prechtl's General Movements Assessment (GMA) is a standardised tool used to assess your baby's general movements. It can help identify if your baby is at higher risk of having difficulties with movement as they get older, such as cerebral palsy and other developmental conditions.

What are 'general movements'?

All babies, whether full term or preterm move on their own. These movements are called 'spontaneous movements'. Spontaneous movements start developing 8 weeks after conception and gradually become more complex as the baby matures. 'General movements' are a type of spontaneous movement. General movements:

- involve the whole body, offering a variety of arm, leg, neck and trunk movements
- have a gradual beginning and end
- vary in size and speed

You can see these movements when your baby is lying on their back, calm and awake and moving by themselves without any distractions.

Why do we assess general movements?

General movements can give us important information about your baby's development. This allows us to identify which type of support your baby may need and to plan their future care.

We want to assess your baby's general movements because they're in one or more of the following groups:

- born prematurely (at less than 30 weeks)

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- have a birth weight of less than 1000g
 - have had a neurological event at or after birth

We know that there is an increased risk that babies in these groups might have problems with their development. So, it is important that their development is monitored.

When will my baby have this assessment?

Our therapists will aim to take at least one video of your baby while they are admitted on the neonatal unit. The best time to take these videos is when your baby is awake and calm. This is often before a feed. Your baby may have more than one assessment while on the neonatal unit.

A follow-up video is often also done when your baby is 12 to 20 weeks old (corrected age if your baby was born prematurely). This is because baby's general movements change as they get older. The type of movements seen between 12 and 20 weeks enables us to identify any potentially developmental problems more reliably.

What does the assessment involve?

A therapist will take a short recording of your baby's movements while they are awake and moving.

Your baby will need to be undressed down to their nappy or vest, lying flat on their back, and in a calm state with no dummy.

Once the video is completed, specially trained assessors will review the video away from the cot-side. They will analyse your baby's movements. It is best to have more than one person view your baby's movements to score their development correctly. You'll then be given feedback about your baby's movement observation.

What are the risks?

This is a non-invasive assessment that involves no risk to your child.

What are the benefits?

The GMA is a quick, non-invasive, cost-effective assessment. It can help the team looking after your baby:

- decide if your baby would benefit from being referred to specialist services to support their development
- advise you on how you can support your baby's development
- support the best possible outcome for you and your baby

Are there any alternatives?

We'll do extra physical examinations of your baby to look at their movements and reflexes. But, the GMA is one of the best ways to assess how your baby's central nervous system is developing. This lets us provide early developmental support if they need it.

When will I get the results?

Once the therapy team have taken the video of your baby, they need to take some time to analyse it. They will aim to discuss the results with you within 2 weeks of taking the video.

More information

If you would like any additional information about the GMA, please do not hesitate to speak to one of the therapists on the neonatal unit.

How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service, and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. If you have any **suggestions** or **comments** about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (**PALS**) on **020 3312 7777** (10.00 – 16.00, Monday to Friday). You can also email PALS at imperial.pals@nhs.net The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

Or you may wish to complain by contacting our complaints department:

Complaints department, fourth floor, Salton House, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street
London W2 1NY

Email: ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net

Telephone: **020 3312 1337 / 1349**

Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print or easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille or in alternative languages. Please email the communications team:
imperial.communications@nhs.net

Wi-fi

Wi-fi is available at our Trust. For more information visit our website: www.imperial.nhs.uk