



Newborn Screening FACT Sheet

Congenital Hypothyroidism (CH)

What Is CH?

CH is a condition in which the thyroid gland doesn't make enough thyroid hormone. The thyroid gland is in the neck.

What Causes CH?

CH happens when the thyroid gland doesn't make any or enough hormones. This mainly occurs because the thyroid gland didn't develop, or because it developed in a different place in the body. No one knows why the thyroid gland doesn't develop all the way, or why it doesn't develop where it should.

What Symptoms or Problems Occur with CH?

[Symptoms are something out of the ordinary that a parent notices.]

There are different symptoms of CH in babies. The most obvious are:

- ◆ **Skin:** Some CH babies have newborn jaundice (a yellow color) longer than usual. Their skin may look pale or blotchy.
- ◆ **Appetite and Digestion:** CH babies may not want to feed. It might be hard to keep them awake during feedings. They may be very constipated.
- ◆ **Growth:** CH newborns are often large. They usually have poor growth and weight gain if they are not treated.
- ◆ **Circulation:** Babies with CH may have a slow heart rate and low blood pressure. Their hands and feet may be cool to the touch. This is because of poor circulation.
- ◆ **Activity and Development:** Babies with CH are often quiet and don't cry much. They may not be interested in sights or sounds around them. They may sleep for a long time, and then have to be woken up for feeding. They may feel "floppy" when they are picked up.

What is the Treatment for CH?

Medications – The doctor will prescribe synthetic (man-made) thyroid hormone to replace your child's missing thyroid hormone. The medicine acts just like the natural hormone made in the body. The synthetic thyroid hormone doesn't cause other problems when the right amount is given.

Things to Remember

Babies will have normal growth and development when they get their thyroid medicine regularly.

Your baby has the same chance for a normal life as any other baby.