

# Rectal Suction Biopsy Procedure

Information for parents and carers

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Oxford Newborn  
Care Unit

## **Why we are considering undertaking a rectal biopsy?**

A rectal biopsy is a procedure performed to help diagnose Hirschsprung's disease, a rare condition which can make it difficult for babies and children to open their bowels. It is caused by the nerves that supply the lower bowel (colon and rectum) not developing properly. The disease is usually diagnosed shortly after birth but can sometimes be recognised in older infants and children.

## **How is a rectal biopsy performed?**

The procedure involves taking samples of tissue from a few centimetres within the rectum, using a suction biopsy technique. Usually, three very tiny pieces of tissue are obtained for examination under a microscope.

This procedure is normally performed whilst your baby is awake and is usually not painful, but they may feel some discomfort. We will give paracetamol beforehand and provide comfort measures such as a dummy, oral sucrose and wrapping your baby during the procedure.

## **Before the procedure**

A paediatric surgeon will explain the procedure to you and gain written consent. A dose of prophylactic antibiotic will be given one hour prior to the procedure to prevent infection, and 2 doses are given after the procedure, 8 and 16 hours later.

## **After the procedure**

Your baby will remain in hospital until the day after the procedure, so that their heart rate, temperature, respiratory rate, blood pressure and oxygen saturations can be monitored for 24 hours.

Normal care can be resumed following the biopsy, including normal milk feeding.

If there is ongoing discomfort, paracetamol can be prescribed after the procedure. Anything more than mild discomfort may be a warning sign of a rare complication – please inform the staff looking after your baby if you are concerned.

## **Complications can include:**

- Bleeding (a very small amount of blood in the nappy is normal). Larger amounts of blood occur occasionally and may require a blood transfusion (1:200 biopsies).
- Infection (rare, approximately 1:2000 cases)
- Bowel Perforation (rare, approximately 1:2000 cases)
- Obtaining an inadequate sample (approximately 10% of cases) – in which case a repeat procedure is required.

## **Signs that your baby may be unwell include:**

- Difficult or fast breathing
- Poor feeding
- Abnormal drowsiness or irritability
- Change in skin colour (pale, blue, mottled)
- High or low temperature
- Abnormally swollen tummy

For more details, please download the BabyCheck App through the QR Code below:







## Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

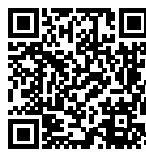
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