



Head Ultrasound

Parent/Caregiver/Whānau Information – Neonatal Services

Some babies born prematurely are at risk of developing bleeding into the fluid spaces of the brain (the ventricles) because of the fragility of their blood vessels. Some of these bleeds will resolve spontaneously and cause no future problems. A small number of babies will have more significant bleeds which may affect their development in the future. In the Neonatal Unit we use head ultrasound scans to assess babies at risk of bleeding within the brain

Ultrasound uses sound waves to see the structures inside the skull. A small amount of gel is placed on the baby's head and the probe is placed over the anterior fontanelle (the soft spot at the top of your baby's head). It is the same sort of scan as an ultrasound scan during pregnancy. It is not painful and causes no harm to your baby.

We routinely scan babies under 32 weeks or 1500g. We perform several scans to monitor for bleeding and to check on whether these bleeds are resolving or progressing. A small number of babies may go on to develop enlargement of the ventricles (fluid filled spaces in the brain) or cystic changes within the brain.

Monitoring these changes with head ultrasound can help us predict whether your baby is likely to need some help with development in the form of an early intervention programme.

After each head ultrasound a consultant, clinical nurse specialist or registrar will sit down with you and discuss the results.



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