



# Neonatal Heart Scan Clinic

Whānau/Parent/Caregiver Information – Neonatal Services

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## Background

As part of routine care after birth all infants are required to have a full examination performed. This may be completed by your LMC, a paediatric doctor or your general practitioner. Many infants are found to have extra heart sounds (murmurs) in the first few days after delivery. Some murmurs are normal in a newborn but they may also indicate a heart problem. The heart may have a hole in it, a heart valve may leak, or a valve may not open properly.

In Christchurch, heart scans performed on pēpi (baby/ies) in their first six weeks of life are done by a team of Neonatal Paediatricians who have undertaken training in ultrasound of the heart. We will involve the Paediatric Cardiologists from Starship Hospital if we have concerns. If in the future there are clinical concerns about heart disease a repeat scan should be considered.

## Echocardiogram (Echo) or heart scan

An echocardiogram is an ultrasound scan of the heart. Very high frequency sound waves (ultrasound) are used to create a moving picture of the heart and the blood flowing through it, using a sophisticated computer. This test detects most heart defects and can provide detailed information about the nature and severity of heart problems of many kinds. The test is not painful, but requires that the pēpi or tamaiti (child) remain still for 20 to 30 minutes (sometimes longer). Sucrose (concentrated sugar) is sometimes used to help pēpi settle during or prior to the scan.

## Things you can do to help

It is helpful if your pēpi has been fed within an hour or so of the scan. This means that the pēpi is more likely to sleep. A moving pēpi during the scan will mean it takes longer to get the pictures.

## Follow-up

Results from the scan will be sent to your LMC and GP. If you have been referred from a private paediatrician they will also receive a copy. The scan result will be discussed with you at the time of the scan. Any plans for further review will be discussed also.

