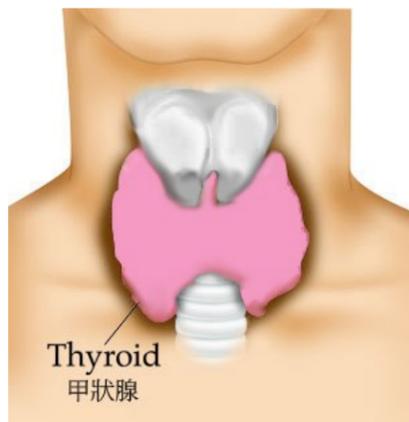


# Congenital Hypothyroidism



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Genetic Screening Unit  
Clinical Genetic Service  
Department of Health

## Thyroid Gland

The thyroid gland is one of the major endocrine organs in our body. It secretes a hormone called thyroxine, which is vital for our body metabolism, and is required for growth and mental development.



## Causes

1. Thyroid gland is not in the right position
2. Problems in the formation of thyroxine
3. Absence of thyroid gland

## Symptoms

### No obvious early symptoms

until months or years later.

Thyroxine is crucial for normal mental development

in the first two years of life.

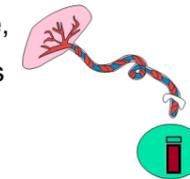
If not diagnosed and treated

early, irreversible developmental delay will be resulted.



## Blood Testing

The Genetic Screening Unit of Clinical Genetic Service, Department of Health, provides free newborn screening for all babies born in public hospitals.



This test simply uses baby's umbilical cord blood. Babies with marginal test results will require re-testing. As soon as congenital hypothyroidism is diagnosed, early treatment can then be provided.

## Treatment

- ※ Daily thyroxine supplement
- ※ The treatment is lifelong
- ※ It is important for the baby to have regular drug-taking and follow-up



With early treatment, good drug  
Compliance and regular follow-up,  
baby's growth and mental development  
will not be affected



## Common Questions & Answers

### 1. What are the reasons of Congenital Hypothyroidism?

There are 3 reasons:

- i. Thyroid Gland is not in the right position.
- ii. There are problems in the formation of thyroxine.
- iii. Thyroid gland is not developing well.

### 2. Is Congenital Hypothyroidism a genetic problem?

It is now evident that genetic causes contribute to Congenital Hypothyroidism. More research is necessary to quantify the risk to the offspring.

### 3. How long does the baby need to take medications if the baby has Congenital Hypothyroidism?

It depends on the cause of Congenital Hypothyroidism and the baby's condition. Some might need to take life long medication according to doctor's instruction.

### 4. Is Congenital Hypothyroidism curable?

Due to its genetic components, curable is in the sense that treatment has been successful in preventing severe neurological consequences. Since babies are deficient in Thyroxine Hormone, babies may need to take life long Thyroxine replacement. As long as your baby takes the medicine and follows up regularly according to the doctor's instruction, your baby will grow as normal as other babies.

### 5. After the raised Thyroid Stimulating Hormone (TSH) subsided, would it become abnormal again?

Generally, it is unusual for TSH to become abnormal after subsided. You may consult your family doctor or paediatrician if you have any worry about the baby's health.

### 6. Is raised Thyroid Stimulating Hormone (TSH) caused by mother eating wrong food during pregnancy?

It is usually not caused by mother eating wrong food, apart from taking Anti-Thyroid drugs during pregnancy.

### 7. Why is there stress when baby is delivered by Caesarean Section?

No matter which mode of delivery is, the baby will be stressed, in addition to other factors, such as cold external environment may affect TSH level.

\*This pamphlet does not cover all the questions. You may consult your family doctor or Paediatrician if you have any worry about the baby's health.