

FACTSHEET

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General Movements Assessment- Information for parents

What is the General Movements Assessment?

The General Movements Assessment is an approach to infant neurological assessment that is being used in hospitals throughout the world. It was developed by Professor Heinz Prechtl (a Developmental Neurologist from Austria) and has been well researched by a group of highly respected Neonatologists, Neurologists, Paediatricians and Allied Health Professionals.

What are General Movements?

All babies, whether full term or preterm move on their own and these movements are called "spontaneous movements". They start developing 8 weeks after conception and become gradually more complex as the baby matures. General Movements are the most complex and frequently occurring of these spontaneous movements. They involve the whole body in a variable sequence of arm, leg, neck and trunk movements. They vary in size and speed and have a gradual beginning and end. Other spontaneous movements include stretches, yawns and startles.

Why do we use the General Movements Assessment?

Your baby may have been born prematurely or had difficulties while in the womb, at birth, or shortly after birth. In all of these cases it is important that their development is monitored. One of the early ways of doing this is with the General Movements Assessment.

The General Movements Assessment is a non-invasive assessment that can be used in infants from birth to 4 months of age. It has been shown through research to be a reliable assessment tool for identifying early signs of motor delay and infants at risk of neurological impairment, specifically infants at risk of cerebral palsy.

The General Movements Assessment is one part of a comprehensive assessment that is used to monitor your baby's progress as they grow.

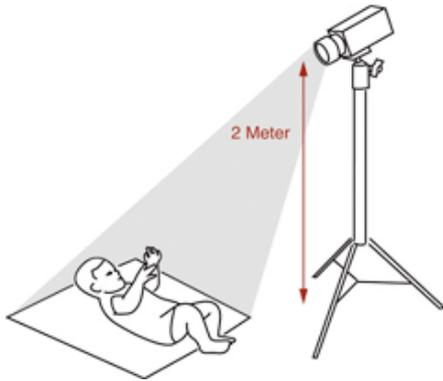
What does the assessment involve?

The assessment involves taking a short video recording of your baby while they are awake and moving. The baby is filmed lying on their back in their cot or on the floor. They must be in a calm state and only be wearing their nappy.

Your baby may be assessed more than once using this assessment while they are in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit or Special Care Nursery. A follow up video is often done when your baby is 12-14 weeks old (corrected age if your baby was born prematurely). This video may be taken in a variety of ways including your NICU clinic review, by your local hospital therapist, and some families may even be asked to record a video at home.

The video will then be observed by specially trained assessors (typically therapists, doctors and nurses) and assessment made regarding your baby's movements. It is ideal to have more than one person view your baby's movements to correctly score their development, and

therefore your baby's video may be viewed by trained assessors from other hospitals and/or organisations. You will then be provided with feedback about your baby's movement observation.



What happens next?

If early signs of motor delay are present, your therapist will provide you with some play ideas to promote movement skills. They may also refer you to a therapy team in your local area. Your baby's development should continue to be monitored as they grow.

Consent and privacy

If you consent to your baby having a video taken, you will also be consenting to having other trained assessors view the video for assessment and training/educational purposes only. Your baby's video will be stored securely and will not be accessible on the internet or other sharing mediums.

If you agree to have videos taken of your baby and observations made using the General Movements Assessment please sign the appropriate consent form supplied by the hospital.

If you have any questions regarding any of this information, please make sure you approach the medical or therapy team involved in your baby's care.

For more information:

<https://www.cerebralpalsy.org.au/what-is-cerebral-palsy/signs-and-symptoms-of-cp/general-movements-assessment/>