

PARENT FACT SHEET

DISORDER

Congenital Hypothyroidism (CH)

CAUSE

The thyroid gland is responsible for producing the hormone, thyroxine (T4). Thyroxine is very important in the growth and development of the infant's brain, body, bone development, in regulating the infant's body temperature, and in making sure that fat and muscle are distributed normally throughout the body. Under normal circumstances, the thyroid gland is regulated by the pituitary gland. The pituitary gland recognizes when the body is not producing enough T4 and produces thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH). There are a variety of causes for CH. The thyroid gland may never have developed. The thyroid gland may have developed abnormally or be smaller than normal. The thyroid could even be misplaced to an abnormal location.

IF NOT TREATED

There is a high rate of severe mental retardation and growth delays in untreated children with CH or in those children who were delayed in beginning treatment.

TREATMENT OPTIONS

Your child will need to be under the care of a metabolic specialist. Treatment is needed throughout life.

- Your child will require thyroid replacement medications. The metabolic specialist will prescribe these medications and make adjustments in the dosage as necessary.
- Remember to never mix thyroid medications with soy formula as the baby will be unable to absorb the medication and will not receive the medication's benefits.

IF TREATED

Children that are treated within the first month to six weeks of life can prevent mental retardation, even to the point of having no mental or physical delays, allowing them to lead normal lives. Treatment that begins after 4-6 weeks of life may not reverse any mental impairments that have already occurred, but it can reverse physical impairments that have already occurred.

For more information go to the following website: <http://www.newbornscreening.info>