

# **Red Flags for Community Nurses**

**Assessment of the paediatric patient with  
congenital heart disease in the community**

**2024**

# Respiratory and Circulatory symptoms

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**Respiratory rate** (Rate, rhythm, depth, work of breathing)

**Red flag** symptoms: Nasal flaring, tracheal tug, inter-costal and sub-costal recession, sternal recession, grunting, head bobbing, audible wheeze, cyanosis.

**Oxygen saturations - SpO2 %** (Perfusion to organs – should be done on right hand for pre-ductal saturations)

**Red flag** symptoms: Persistently low below adjusted parameters

**Heart Rate** – Rate, Rhythm and Regularity of heart rate (Cardiac output)

**Red flag** symptoms: Persistently high or low heart rate outside of adjusted parameters when settled, irregular fluctuating heart rate.

**Central capillary refill time** – Central perfusion

**Red flag** symptoms: CCRT >2 seconds

# Disability and Exposure symptoms

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**Pallor** (perfusion, cardiac function, oxygenation)

**Red flag** symptoms: change in colour – blue/grey/pale

**Actions:** Contact CNS or direct to emergency department.

**Weight** (cardiac function/weight monitoring/fluid retention)

**Red flag** symptoms: No weight gain, fluid overload, fluid retention. Signs of poor or no weight gain, large amount of weight gain.

**Actions:** Contact dietician, contact CNS.

**Urination/stools** (cardiac output and kidney function/ gut function)

**Red flag** symptoms: Oligouria, persistent vomiting in babies, vomiting in toddlers and children, dehydration.

**Actions:** Contact CNS or direct to emergency department.

# Other

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**Temperature** (infection/sepsis/increased cardiac output)

**Red flag** symptoms: Temperature >38.0c, visible signs of infection from healing wounds.

**Action:** Contact CNS or direct to emergency department

**Sweating** (cardiac function)

**Red flag:** Sweating during feeding and excessive sweating

**Action:** Contact CNS for advice.

**Anticoagulation medicines e.g Clexane** – subcutaneous technique or clarification of correct dosing

**Red flag** symptoms: bruising

**Action :** Contact CNS for advice.

**Feeding** – adequate weight gain/appropriate weaning and milk selections. Under care of dieticians

**Action :** Contact dietician.



# Actions

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- CNS advice:
  - Bristol **0117 342 8286** using SBAR tool (Situation, Background, Assessment, Recommendation)
  - Cardiff **029 2184 5184**
- Dolphin ward at Bristol Royal Hospital for Children **0117 3428332**
- Send to local hospital emergency department
- Call 999 for immediate life threatening conditions

Our website can be found on

<http://www.uhbristol.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/your-hospitals/bristol-royal-hospital-for-children/what-we-do/community-children%27s-nursing-team/>

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