Routine newborn assessment

**Preparation**
- Family centred care
- Seek parental consent
- Consider cultural needs
- Discuss with parents: purpose, process, timing and limitations of assessments
- Ask about parental concerns
- Encourage participation

**Assessment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General appearance</th>
<th>Growth status</th>
<th>Head, face, neck</th>
<th>Shoulders, arms, hands</th>
<th>Chest</th>
<th>Abdomen</th>
<th>Genitourinary</th>
<th>Hips, legs, feet</th>
<th>Back</th>
<th>Neurological</th>
<th>Discuss</th>
<th>Document</th>
<th>Refer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skin colour, integrity, perfusion</td>
<td>Head shape, size</td>
<td>Length, proportions, symmetry</td>
<td>Size, shape, symmetry, movement</td>
<td>Size, shape, symmetry</td>
<td>Male - penis, foreskin, testes</td>
<td>Spinal column, skin</td>
<td>Spinal column, skin</td>
<td>Behaviour, posture</td>
<td>Skin colour, integrity, perfusion, state of alertness</td>
<td>Discuss findings with parents</td>
<td>Document</td>
<td>Refer</td>
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<tr>
<td>State of alertness</td>
<td>Eye size, position structure</td>
<td>Structure, number of digits</td>
<td>Palpate liver, spleen, kidneys</td>
<td>Palpate liver, spleen, kidneys</td>
<td>Female - clitoris, labia, hymen</td>
<td>Symmetry of scapulae, buttocks</td>
<td>Symmetry of scapulae, buttocks</td>
<td>Muscle tone, spontaneous movements</td>
<td>Activity, range of spontaneous movement</td>
<td>Document in health record(s)</td>
<td>Refer as indicated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activity, range of spontaneous movement</td>
<td>Ear position, structure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Posture, muscle tone</td>
<td>Mouth, palate, teeth, gums tongue, frenulum</td>
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<td>Jaw size</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Further investigation**

- Urgent
  - Growth and appearance
  - Dysmorphic features
  - Excessive weight loss
  - Jaundice < 24 hours of age
  - Central cyanosis
  - Petechiae/new/unrelated to birth
  - Pallor, haemangiomata
  - Head and neck
  - Enlarged/bulging/sunken fontanelle
  - Macro/microcephaly
  - Subgaleal haemorrhage
  - Caput, cephalhaematomata
  - Fused sutures
  - Facial palsy/asymmetry on crying
  - Hazy, dull cornea
  - Absent red eye reflex
  - Pupils unequal/dilated/constRICTED
  - Purulent conjunctivits/yellow sclera
  - Nasal obstruction
  - Dacrocyst
  - Cleft lip/palate
  - Unresponsive to noise
  - Absent ear canal or microtia
  - Ear drainage
  - Small receding chin/micrognathia
  - Neck masses, swelling, webbing
  - Swelling over or fractured clavicle

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- Upper limbs
  - Limb hypotonia, contractures, palsy
  - Palmar crease pattern

- Chest
  - Respiratory distress
  - Apnoeic episodes
  - Abnormal HR, rhythm, regularity
  - Heart murmurs
  - Weak or absent pulses
  - Positive pulse oximetry

- Abdomen
  - Organomegaly
  - Gastrochisis/exomphalos
  - Bilateral undescended testes
  - Bilious vomiting
  - Inguinal hernia
  - < 3 umbilical vessels
  - Signs of umbilical infection

- Genitourinary
  - No urine/meconium in 24 hours
  - Ambiguous genitalia
  - Testicular torsion
  - Hypospadias, penile chordee, micropenis

- Hips, legs and feet
  - Risk factors for hip dysplasia
  - Positive/abnormal Barlow’s and/or
  - Ortolani manoeuvres
  - Contractures/hypotonia
  - Fixed talipes
  - Developmental hip dysplasia

- Back
  - Curve of spine
  - Non-intact spine
  - Tufts of hair/dimple along intact spine

- Neurological
  - Weak/irritable/absent cry
  - Absent/exaggerated reflexes
  - No response to consoling
  - Inappropriate carer response to crying
  - Seizures
  - Altered state of consciousness


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Queensland Clinical Guidelines, Guidelines@health.qld.gov.au]

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