The Six Week Check

BACKGROUND

- It is recommended that all infants have a postnatal examination at 6-8 weeks of age
- The purpose of the visit is to address parental concerns and assess the general health of the infant
- Consultations should take between 20-30 minutes

ADVICE

- No solids until 4-6 months
- If breastfeeding issues, refer to a lactation consultant
- Avoid soya milk, goats milk, cows milk and honey
- Reflux and loose stools are common – reassure if adequate weight gain

HEALTH PROMOTION

- The six week check is an opportunity to advise parents on the following:
  - ✓ Immunization
  - ✓ Nutrition
  - ✓ Sudden unexpected death in infants
  - ✓ Unintentional injury prevention
  - ✓ Recognition of illness

HISTORY

- Birth history
- Feeding history
- Development
  - ✓ Smiling
  - ✓ Fixing and following
  - ✓ Responding to loud noise

EXAMINATION

- Plot weight, length and head circumference on centile chart
- Examine eyes for red reflex
- Palpate palate
- Cardiac & respiratory exams
- Hip exam (Ortolani & Barlow manoeuvres)
- Femoral pulses
- Examine genitalia and anus
- Palpate spine
- Note skin colour, birthmarks, rashes
- Assess tone, posture & reflexes

INVESTIGATIONS

- Nil required if baby is well and examination is normal

TAKE HOME MESSAGES

- Exclusive breastfeeding is favourable and is a learned skill
- Use personal health records
- The 6-week check is a very important screening examination

REFERRAL

- Prolonged jaundice esp. if pale stools or dark urine
- Poor weight gain
- Severe infant distress
- Parental concerns regarding hearing, vision, lack of smile
- Rapid head growth
- Positive exam findings

EXPECTED WEIGHT GAIN

- Regain birth weight by 2 weeks
- Weight gain of 150-200g per week for first 3 months

BREASTFEEDING

- Feeding method of choice in first 6 months
- Correct attachment and positioning of the infant are vital
- Practical assistance is essential

FORMULA FEEDS

- Start with whey-based formula
- Avoid frequent formula changes
- Should receive 120-150ml/kg/day (1oz = 30ml)