

# GENERAL MOVEMENT ASSESSMENT (GMA)

## WHAT ARE GENERAL MOVEMENTS?

General movements are distinct, spontaneous movement patterns involving the whole body. They can be seen in the baby from before birth up to about 20 weeks after their due date.

## WHY THIS ASSESSMENT?

This assessment is a screening tool. It is non-invasive clinical assessment where we record and observe the baby. It gives the doctors and therapists information on how your baby's neurological system is developing.

GMAs are performed on babies who had medical concerns or required extra attention at birth.

Early detection of movement delays allows for early intervention, which can improve outcomes for babies and their families.

## STAGES OF GENERAL MOVEMENTS

There are two stages of movements. They involve the whole body and are variable, complex and fluent.

You may be familiar with other spontaneous motor patterns seen in young babies such as startles, twitches, yawning and breathing movements.

General movements mature and change in a specific order. The two phases are below:

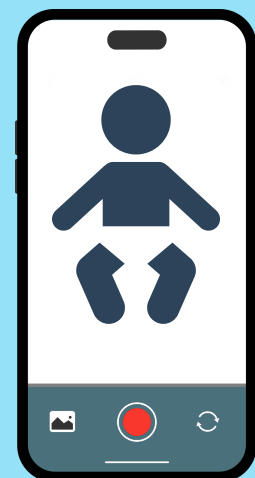
AGE	PHASE
Up to 6-9 weeks, corrected age	"Writhing"
12 weeks through to 16-20 weeks, corrected age	"Fidgety"

## How is the assessment performed?

While in the NICU, your baby's progress and development are closely monitored in many different ways.

One of these is by performing the GMA. We observe and record your baby when:

- Infants are awake, calm, and alert, or in active sleep.
- Lying in a supine position (on their back).
- Must not have any limbs covered by clothing (just in their diaper).
- There are no distractions while filming (e.g., no toys, no touching baby).
- The bedside is clear of objects.
- There is nothing in the mouth.
- We film a short 1-3 minute video.



If you have questions or concerns please ask your medical care team.

