

General Movements Assessment (GMA): A Tool for Early Diagnosis of Cerebral Palsy (CP)

What is the General Movements Assessment (GMA)?

The brain tells muscles what to do. Cerebral Palsy (CP) affects this.

The GMA is a tool to look at how a baby's brain is developing. The short video of your baby can help identify issues like CP.

- We look at the way your baby moves between birth and 20 weeks corrected age.
- If we see atypical movements starting around 9 to 12 weeks, there is a higher risk for CP.

How is the GMA done?

We will take a 1 to 2-minute video of your baby while they are awake and calm.

To reduce errors during the test, your baby should:

- Wear only a diaper and be on their back.
- Be free to move arms and legs.
- Not have calming items like a pacifier, blanket or toy.
- Not be looking at or talking to you.



Who can do the GMA?

Healthcare providers with special training and certification do this assessment. Providers are usually therapists and doctors who specialize in working with babies.

Should my baby get a GMA?

If your baby is younger than 20 weeks and there were medical concerns at birth, please speak to your provider to see if a GMA could help. Examples of medical concerns include prematurity, lack of oxygen or stroke.

Why is the GMA important?

The GMA helps you understand your baby's development and helps us know if there is concern for CP. If the test indicates there is concern for CP, we will refer for possible diagnosis. It will also help us make sure your baby is getting the supportive therapies and medical treatments that they need. Earlier diagnosis leads to earlier access to this beneficial care.

Where can I get more information?

Watch this short video from the CP Foundation on using the GMA. yourcpf.org/expert-videos/general-movements/

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To Learn More

- Cerebral Palsy Program
206-987-0199
- Ask your child's healthcare provider
- seattlechildrens.org

Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line, 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.