

IMPORTANT INFORMATION - CHINA

RE: MEDICAL TESTING AND YOUR CHILD'S HEALTH

Dr. Dana Johnson, M.D., Ph.D., Founder and Co-Director of the Int'l Adoption Clinic at the University of Minnesota
Report on Medical Testing as Presented to Children's Bridge, June 20, 1998 at Credit Valley Hospital,
Mississauga

Medical Testing of Your Child

Having these tests conducted on your child who has been adopted from China is VERY IMPORTANT. Dr. Johnson reported that often when parents take their newly arrived child in for medical evaluation, they are well-dressed, upper-middle class parents with a beautiful delightful child! The physician will look at them, look at the child, and say, "this child looks too healthy to have any of these conditions, we won't need to bother with this testing". WRONG!! Many of these conditions, which are prevalent in China, may exist in your child while not creating obvious symptoms. It is imperative that these tests are performed. Even if it has been several years since your adoption and she has been perfectly healthy, if you have not had some of these tests done, you should do it now.

- Hemoglobin, RBC Indices & Iron Status
- Hepatitis B Markers (test upon arrival and again after six months--do not rely on reports of testing from China)
- HIV Serology (type of test depends on child's age, ask your physician)
- RPR or VDRL
- Stool for Ova and Parasites
- Mantoux Test (10 mm or greater should be considered +ve--as most of the children are from endemic areas. (5mm in some children, immunosuppressed)
- Hepatitis C
- Thyroid (may have had iodine deficiency)
- Rickets Evaluation (may have had Vitamin D deficiency)
- Lead levels
- Hearing and vision screening
- Complete dental check-up as soon as first tooth erupts NOT at age 3 as is frequently recommended
- It is also important to document any previous visible injuries, signs of abuse, healed fractures or Mongolian birthmarks. Dr. Johnson noted that child protection services become concerned if you show up in the emergency room with a child who has signs of previous injury or healed fractures. Documentation on arrival will avoid any fingers being pointed at you as parents.

Reported Results (from University of Minnesota International Adoption Clinic Study of 244 children adopted from China.)

- 0% positive for HIV (n=204), . 0.5% positive for syphilis
- 4.4% positive for parasites (n=136) Eg. (one of the lowest incidences of parasites among international adoptees)
- 3.5% positive for TB (n=71) (relatively low, lower than Eastern Europe), . 2.5% were positive for HBsAg (n=233)
- 9% had a lead level that was above normal, but most of these children were generally well below the borderline region for treatment. It was a rare for a child to test well above the level that would require treatment.
- 1/47 was Positive for Hepatitis C Antibody (Dr. Johnson advises that all children from China, regardless of how long it has been since their adoption, should be tested for Hepatitis C--the child can be asymptomatic for years).

Immunizations

Children adopted from China are generally provided with an immunization record that is received in China. However, the information provided may not be accurate. Have your immunization record translated when you return home then either check for protective titres for what has been reported or re-immunize. Discuss these options with your physician. Dr. Johnson recommends that if a course of immunizations has been started in China but not fully completed, that you start over. Again, discuss these options with your physician. One option that is NOT advisable though, is to assume that what has been reported is correct.

Final Word: It has been reported to Children's Bridge that some parents are declaring these tests a personal choice and are choosing not to perform them on their children. **This is not fair or safe to your child or others he/she may come in contact**

with. The vast majority of children adopted from China do NOT have any of the more serious conditions listed above but there is a small chance **so if you have not done so, regardless of when you adopted your child-- have your child tested and be sure.**