

Just A Few Drops Of Blood... Can Detect Serious Hidden Disorders In Your Baby

What is newborn screening?

Newborn screening is a special blood test for newborns. Just a few drops of blood from your baby's heel are put onto a special test paper and sent to the Wisconsin State Lab of Hygiene to be tested. Newborn screening finds babies who may have a hidden disorder that needs early treatment.

What are "hidden" disorders?

Hidden disorders are health problems that are difficult or impossible for you or your baby's doctor to find just by looking at your baby. If not treated, these disorders can lead to slow growth, severe illness, brain damage, or possibly death. Early treatment can help prevent some of these serious health problems.

Why must my baby be screened?

Wisconsin law requires that all babies born in Wisconsin be screened before leaving the hospital. If your baby is born outside of a hospital, the screening test must be done within a week of birth.

Can I say "no" to the test?

As a parent, you may refuse newborn screening for your baby only if your religious beliefs and practices do not allow this testing. If you refuse to have the test done, you may be asked to sign a paper stating that you refused to have your baby tested for these very serious disorders.

Is the test safe?

The test is simple and safe. Some babies cry when their heel is pricked, but the discomfort lasts only a short time. There is a small risk of infection when the heel is pricked. This risk is very low.

How will I know the results of my baby's screening test?

Your baby's doctor will receive a report with the test results. Ask about these results when you take your baby in for a regular check-up.

What if my baby's test is abnormal?

If the test is abnormal, you will be contacted within a few days after you leave the hospital. If your baby's newborn screening result is abnormal, your doctor will talk with you about the next steps to take. An abnormal newborn screening result does not mean that your baby has a disorder. This is a screening test that finds babies who may be at risk for a disorder. Further testing must be done to find out if your baby has a disorder and needs treatment.

Why do some babies need to be retested?

There are two main reasons why a repeat screening test may be needed: (1) there was a problem with the way the first blood sample was collected, or (2) the test result was abnormal. To repeat the newborn screening test, a new blood sample is needed from your baby. The newborn screening test is most accurate if your baby's blood is taken after the first 24 hours of life. If your

baby's blood was collected before 24 hours of age, your doctor may ask you to repeat the test when your baby is 1 to 2 weeks old.

How can I help my baby?

- Make sure your baby is tested before you leave the hospital.
- Leave your correct address and phone number with the birth hospital and your baby's doctor. If you do not have a phone, leave the number of a friend or relative who can find you.
- If your baby's doctor asks you to bring your baby back to repeat the newborn screening test or for further testing, do so as soon as possible. It is important that testing be done right away.





These Tests Could **Save** Your Baby's **Life!**

How are the disorders treated?

Each disorder is different. Some are treated with a special diet and others with medicine. If treated early, many babies grow up to lead a normal, healthy life. In a few cases, the disorders may not be completely treatable. Early diagnosis and treatment will allow your baby the best chance of normal growth and development.

How much does the newborn screening test cost?

The cost of the screening test is usually covered by health insurance. Diagnostic testing, if needed, will involve additional costs. To learn the current cost of the newborn screening test, contact the Newborn Screening Coordinator at 608-266-8904.

What will be done with my baby's blood sample after all testing is completed?

Newborn screening samples are kept in secured storage at the Wisconsin State Lab of Hygiene for one year. After that time, the blood sample is destroyed.

Can my baby be screened for other disorders?

Early detection of hearing loss can lead to improved speech and language skills. Many hospitals are offering this screening for newborns. Ask if your baby will be screened for hearing loss.

No one test can detect all disorders in newborns. There may be other rare disorders that can be detected in the newborn period that are not included in the newborn screening test. For more information, talk with your baby's doctor.

Where can I get more information about newborn screening?

For additional information about newborn screening, or to find a current list of all of the disorders screened for in Wisconsin newborns, contact the Newborn Screening Program using the information listed below, or go to the following websites:

Wisconsin State Lab of Hygiene:

www.slh.wisc.edu/newborn

Division of Public Health:

www.dhfs.state.wi.us/DPH_BFCH/Newborn_Screen

National Newborn Screening & Genetics Resource Center

<http://genes-r-us.uthscsa.edu>

Wisconsin Newborn Screening Program

Division of Public Health
P.O. Box 2659
Madison, WI 53701-2659
608-266-8904

Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services
Division of Public Health
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