

Newborn Screening

What is newborn screening?

All babies born in the United States get a blood test soon after birth to check for certain illnesses. They may also be tested for other problems, like hearing loss or heart conditions.

About 24 to 48 hours after your baby is born, a nurse takes a few drops of blood from your baby's heel for testing.

What tests are done?

All babies should be tested for 34 main conditions. However, every state has different laws that decide which conditions to screen for. Ask your doctor which tests are done in your state.

What happens when the results are in?

The results are usually ready within 24 hours of the test, but you may have already gone home from the hospital. If any of the tests are positive, your doctor or someone from your state's newborn screening program will call you.

A positive test does not mean that your child is sick. Some babies need to be retested. It is important to get retested quickly.

Why do we have newborn screening programs?

Babies with certain illnesses may look healthy at birth. Newborn screening finds the illnesses very early, and treatment can be started before there are serious problems. If not treated, some of these illnesses can cause lifelong health problems or early death.

It is important to talk to your doctor if you have any questions about the tests or illnesses.

Where can I get more information?

Your doctor

Boston Children's Hospital

[http://newenglandconsortium.org/for-families/
newborn-screening-guide/](http://newenglandconsortium.org/for-families/newborn-screening-guide/)

Save Babies Through Screening Foundation

http://www.savebabies.org/pregnant_faqs.html

Screening, Technology and Research in Genetics (STAR-G) Project

<http://www.newbornscreening.info/Parents/facts.html>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

<http://www.babysfirsttest.org>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and American Academy of Pediatrics

[https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/
aap-health-initiatives/PEHDIC/Documents/Newborn
Screeningtests.pdf](https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/PEHDIC/Documents/NewbornScreeningtests.pdf)

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This handout is provided to you by your family doctor and the American Academy of Family Physicians. Other health-related information is available from the AAFP online at <http://familydoctor.org>.

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