

NEWBORN SCREENING TESTS:

For Your Baby's Health



Texas Department of State Health Services
Newborn Screening Program
MC 1918
P.O. Box 149347
Austin, Texas 78714-9347
1-800-252-8023 ext. 3957
www.dshs.state.tx.us/newborn



WHY IS MY BABY TESTED?

- Newborn Screening is one of the most important things done for your new baby's health.
- We test all newborns because a few who look healthy have a rare birth defect or disorder.
- If we find it early, we can help prevent serious problems, such as intellectual/developmental disabilities, illness, or death.

HOW IS MY BABY TESTED?

Two screens are required. The tests are done using drops of blood taken from your baby's heel 1 to 2 days after birth in the hospital and again at 7 to 14 days of age in your doctor's office or clinic. Some tests may not give true results.

BUT WE'VE NEVER HAD ANY BIRTH DEFECTS IN OUR FAMILY...

- Many of the babies born with these problems are from healthy families.
- Since these disorders are not very common, the chances are good that your child does NOT have one.

MY BABY SEEMS FINE.

ARE THE TESTS STILL NEEDED?

- Yes. Most babies with these disorders look healthy at birth. Many disorders can't be seen.
- If the newborn screen shows a problem, your baby's doctor will be alerted to do more testing or start special treatment.

IF MY BABY HAS ONE OF THESE DISORDERS, CAN IT BE CURED?

We can't cure these conditions. But early treatment may prevent or control serious health problems.

IF MORE TESTING MUST BE DONE, DOES THAT MEAN THAT MY BABY HAS A PROBLEM?

- No. An abnormal newborn screen only shows the need for more testing. This does NOT mean there is anything wrong. It just means your baby needs to be tested again to double-check for possible problems.
- If your baby's test is unusual for a second time, the doctor may start treating your baby at once or send you to a doctor who specializes in the disorder for more testing.

HOW CAN I HELP THE DOCTOR TO HELP MY BABY?

1. Make sure your baby is tested before he or she leaves the hospital. You should be given a form from your baby's first screen. Take this form and your baby to your doctor or clinic for a second test at 7 to 14 days of age.
2. Your doctor may ask you to bring in your baby for more testing. *Do it quickly!* If your child has a disorder, fast action can be very important.
3. Be sure to give your correct address and phone number to the hospital or doctor. If you don't have a phone, leave the number of a friend, relative, or neighbor with the doctor or hospital.
4. If you move soon after your baby is born, let your doctor know right away. Then, if your child needs to be tested again, your doctor will know where to reach you.

Remember, these steps are very important!

