

Newborn Screening Test

Why does my baby need a screening test?

Certain diseases can be present at birth, even if there are no symptoms. Early detection and treatment of some disorders can help prevent severe intellectual disability, growth problems, health problems, or even sudden infant death. This early detection process is called newborn screening and includes a blood test and careful examination by a doctor or midwife.

How will my baby be tested?

During the first few days after birth, a small blood sample is taken by a simple heel prick. This will only cause a moment of discomfort for your baby. The blood sample is sent to the laboratory at BC Children's Hospital for testing.

What will my baby be tested for?

Your baby will be tested for treatable metabolic disorders, endocrine disorders, blood disorders and Cystic Fibrosis. For more information on these tests, visit Perinatal Services BC www.newbornscreeningbc.ca.

How soon after birth will my baby be tested?

The newborn screening test should be done between 24 and 48 hours after birth. Your baby should not leave the hospital without a blood test.

If you are under the care of a midwife and your baby is not born in the hospital, your midwife will collect the blood during a home visit.

What if I go home with my baby less than 24 hours after birth?

If your baby is born in a hospital but discharged less than 24 hours after birth, they will require 2 blood tests. The first blood test will be done just

before you leave the hospital. The second blood test needs to be done before 2 weeks of age. The second sample is taken to test for disorders that cannot be found until 24 to 72 hours after birth.

When will the results be ready?

The results will usually be ready in a few days. You will not be contacted if the results are normal or negative. If one of the screening test results is positive, your family doctor or midwife will contact you and additional testing will be arranged. The results of follow-up tests will either be normal and rule out the possibility of a disorder, or confirm the diagnosis.

What does it mean if the screen is negative?

A negative screening test result means that the chance your baby has a disorder is very low. It is rare that the test does not pick up a disorder in a baby.

What if the result is positive for one of these rare disorders?

Approximately 1 out of every 1,000 babies are identified with one of these treatable conditions.

If your baby has one of these conditions, early detection will help your baby get effective treatment as soon as possible. You will be referred to a doctor with experience in treating these disorders.

For more information on newborn screening, visit Perinatal Services BC www.perinatalservicesbc.ca/our-services/screening-programs/newborn-screening-program/ or contact your family doctor, registered midwife, or local public health unit.