

Newborn Screening: Protecting Your Baby's Health

The state of New Jersey routinely screens all newborns for many disorders that can cause serious health problems. Since these disorders may not be visible at birth, they may *not* show up during a routine check-up. If they are not detected and treated early, they may cause mental retardation, disability or even death. New Jersey also screens all newborns for hearing loss within the first month of life.

BLOOD SCREENING

How are the blood screens done?

A few drops of blood are taken from your baby's heel at the hospital and sent to the New Jersey newborn screening lab. You can get the results from your baby's healthcare provider. If your baby is not born in a hospital, the healthcare provider who delivers your baby must make sure that the screening is done.

Will more tests be needed?

After the screen is done, your baby's healthcare provider or the N.J. Department of Health and Senior Services will contact you if a diagnostic test (retest) is needed to confirm if your baby has any of the screened disorders. You will be told where to take your baby. This does *not* necessarily mean that your baby has a problem, but it is *important* that you bring your baby back right away for a retest.

What if my child has a problem?

If the retest shows that your baby does have a medical problem, finding it early is the best way to prevent serious physical and mental disabilities from developing. Depending on the problem, healthcare providers may recommend special vitamins, medications or changes in your baby's diet. To protect your baby's health, treatment is sometimes started before the results of the retest are available.

If you are asked to bring your baby back for more blood or hearing tests, it is important to do so right away, but remember that it does NOT necessarily mean that your baby has a problem.

What are supplemental screens?

Supplemental screens look for other life-threatening conditions not routinely tested for in the state lab and are available through a few private labs. They can be done before your baby leaves the hospital using blood drops collected from a heel stick. There may be additional costs for these screens. Speak with your healthcare provider for more information.

HEARING SCREENING

How are the hearing screens done?

A healthcare provider in the hospital will screen your baby's hearing, usually while your baby is sleeping. Babies who are not screened before they go home, or those not born in a hospital, should be screened by 1 month of age. Speak with your baby's healthcare provider about how to have your baby's hearing screened or to get the results.



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Will more tests be needed?

After the screen is done, you will be told if a diagnostic test (retest) is needed to confirm if your baby has hearing loss. Your baby's healthcare provider can tell you where to take your baby. This does **not** necessarily mean that your child has hearing loss, but it is **important** to bring your baby right away for a retest.

What if my child has a hearing problem?

If the retest shows that your baby has hearing loss, professionals will discuss treatment options with you. Starting treatment as early as possible gives your child the best chance to develop the very best communication skills.

What if I move or am staying at a different address after my baby is born?

Be sure the hospital and your baby's healthcare provider have your new address and phone number so that you can be reached if additional screens are needed.

How do I get more information?

Ask your baby's healthcare provider or call the N.J. Department of Health and Senior Services.

- **FOR A LIST OF DISORDERS INCLUDED IN SCREENING**, contact the Newborn Screening and Genetic Services Program at 609-292-1582 or www.state.nj.us/health/fhs/schfact.htm.
- **FOR HEARING SCREENING INFORMATION**, call the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Program at 609-292-5676 (voice) or 609-984-1343 (TTY).
- **FOR ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**, visit the March of Dimes Pregnancy & Newborn Health Education Center Web site at www.marchofdimes.com (www.nacersano.org in Spanish).



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