

These Tests Could Save Your Baby's Life

Newborn Screening Tests

Texas Department of State Health Services
Newborn Screening Program
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Texas Department of State
Health Services



What is a newborn screen?

- A few babies who look healthy at birth have a rare birth defect or disorder.
- The screening tests check to see if your newborn has one.
- If found early, we can help prevent serious problems, such as intellectual/developmental disabilities, illness, or death.

All babies born in Texas have their blood screened for a number of rare genetic disorders or medical conditions. The newborn screening website (dshs.texas.gov/newborn) provides a list of all conditions that are tested. Look for the "screened disorders" link.

How is my baby tested?

The test is done using drops of blood taken from your baby's heel 1 to 2 days after birth. A second sample of blood must be taken to test again at 7 to 14 days of age in your doctor's office or clinic.

But we've never had any birth defects in our family...

- Many of the babies born with these problems are from healthy families.
- The chances are good that your child does NOT have one since these disorders are not very common.
- By testing your baby, we can find out if he or she has a disorder and start early treatment.

I received a letter from the "Follow-up Program." What is that?

- The Follow-up Program helps your baby receive the care he or she may need if a screen result is unusual.

- First, the Program contacts your doctor or clinic about doing more testing.
- When you are contacted to take your baby in for more tests, please do so *quickly*.
- As part of the Program, public health nurses and social workers can help families with follow-up steps.
- The Follow-up Program also helps to make sure your child's health is checked on a regular basis.
- If you move to a new address or change your phone number, be sure to tell your doctor or clinic so you can be reached for check-ups.

If my baby has one of these disorders, can it be cured?

- We can't cure these disorders. But early treatment may prevent or control serious health problems.
- Doctors who specialize in these disorders are available to assist doctors with diagnosis and treatment of babies with a disorder. Your doctor might send you to one of these specialists.

