

What is Newborn Screening?

Newborn Screening is a blood test for certain genetic disorders.



The North Dakota Newborn Screening Program identifies babies who may have one of these disorders and alerts the baby's health-care provider regarding the possible need for further testing and special care. With early diagnosis and treatment, complications from these disorders may be prevented.

How is My Baby Tested?

A medical professional will take a few drops of blood from your baby's heel between 24 to 48 hours of birth, or just before your baby leaves the hospital. The blood is collected on an absorbent filter paper and sent to a lab.

IMPORTANT – Babies born outside of hospitals also should be tested, preferably at about 24 hours to five days after birth. Parents can arrange the screening with their health-care provider.

What if I Don't Want My Baby Screened?

North Dakota law requires that all babies be screened, unless the parents object to testing. A refusal form must be signed if the parents object to the test and submitted to the North Dakota Department of Health.

If a Retest is Necessary, Does That Mean That My Baby Has a Disorder?

No. It does NOT mean there is anything wrong with your baby. It means that another blood sample is needed to make sure there are no problems. There are various reasons why a lab may retest a baby and it does not automatically mean something is wrong. For a few serious conditions or abnormal lab results, the health-care provider may order additional lab tests and begin treating the baby immediately.

My Baby Looks Healthy, Are the Tests Necessary?

Yes. Most babies with these disorders appear healthy at birth, but they may have a disorder that could cause mental retardation, illness or even death.

What Will My Baby Be Tested For?

The North Dakota Department of Health tests for many disorders that:

- Affect how the body breaks down proteins (such as PKU).
- Cause hormone problems (such as congenital hypothyroidism).
- Affect how your body makes energy (such as MCAD).
- Affect breathing and getting nutrients from food (such as cystic fibrosis).

For a complete list of disorders, visit www.ndhealth.gov/newbornscreening.



NEWBORN SCREENING

Who?

Every baby born in North Dakota.

What?

Screening for genetic disorders.

When?

Between 24 to 48 hours of age is the best time for screening.

How?

Several small drops of blood, usually from your baby's heel, are allowed to dry on a special paper and then sent to a laboratory for testing.



How Can I Help My Health-Care Provider Help My Baby?

Make sure the hospital knows how to contact you when you leave the hospital. If you don't have a telephone, leave the phone number of a friend, relative or neighbor. Let your doctor know immediately if you move soon after the baby is born. If your baby needs retesting, the doctor can then reach you. In addition, give your cell phone number to the hospital and your health-care provider.

If you are asked to bring your baby in for further testing, do so as soon as possible.



Screening for a Healthy Baby



North Dakota Department of Health
Division of Family Health
600 East Boulevard Ave., Dept. 301
Bismarck, ND 58505-0200
800.472.2286 or 701.328.2493



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT of HEALTH