



What is newborn screening?

After your baby is born, at about 1 day of age, she/he will receive some routine tests. One is to test your baby's hearing, and the other is a blood test for various rare conditions that can only be detected by a blood test.

How is the blood-spot test done, and why?

The blood spot testing involves taking 5 drops of blood from your baby's heel. The blood is placed on a special filter paper and sent to a central laboratory. It is tested for 28 conditions. These rare conditions can cause very serious developmental and health problems. You may have heard of some of these, like

Cystic Fibrosis, PKU or Sickle Cell Disease. The reason the test is done is because most of the problems caused by the conditions can be prevented or minimized if found early! The blood tests are the best way to find these conditions. For many, the treatment is a special diet. For others treatment may include medicine or supplements. But for all the conditions, it is important to find them early and begin treatment to avoid problems.

What do I need to do?

It is very important that you **make sure the hospital has current contact information for you, an emergency contact person and the name of the health care professional who will be taking care of your baby** after you and your baby are discharged from the hospital.

You may be asked to bring your baby back for another test. This may be a repeat blood spot because something happened to the filter paper bloodspot during collection or handling, or because the results are inconclusive. Or a different test may be needed because the results are "positive" and your baby is at higher risk of having one of the conditions screened. Most babies who need repeat or confirmatory testing turn out to have normal results on the repeat test. However, about 50 babies a year are found to have one of the conditions screened in Nebraska. So it is very important that you act quickly and take your baby back for the additional testing right away. Baby's who have these conditions do best when the repeat or confirmatory testing happens quickly, a diagnosis can be made and treatment can be started early.

Besides talking to your baby's health care professional, where can you get more information?

If you want **more information** check out Nebraska's Newborn Screening website at: www.dhhs.ne.gov/nsp.



If you do not have a health care provider for your baby, now is a good time to arrange this. Having a medical home (<http://www.aap.org/healthtopics/medicalhome.cfm>) for your baby will help his/her health and well being for years to come.

