

50 years of Saving Lives with Newborn Screening



Most babies are healthy when they are born. All babies are tested because a few babies look healthy but have a rare health problem. Early detection can help prevent serious problems like organ damage or death.

What is Newborn Screening?

- Starts with a simple heel stick to collect a few drops of blood.
- If born in a facility: collected after 24 hours of age
- If born elsewhere (home): collect by the 3rd day of life by PCP, Midwife or by nurse.
- Results are sent to the Arkansas Department of Health Public Health Lab at the Arkansas Department of Health.

Testing over 31 different disorders, such as:

PKU (Phenylketonuria) –This condition started the field of newborn screening when a scientist invented a simple way to test hundreds of babies for this rare but debilitating condition. Babies with PKU cannot break down phenylalanine, which is a common amino acid in many proteins, such as the protein in milk. Untreated, PKU can cause severe damage to the brain and central nervous system.

Cystic fibrosis – A disease that affects the lungs, pancreas and digestive system.

Sickle cell anemia –When the body's red blood cells have abnormal shapes reducing the ability to deliver needed oxygen to the body's tissues.

Reasons for Retesting the Newborn Screen:

- Collected too early – test is most accurate if done after 24 hours of age.
- Born prematurely or needed special care after birth such as a blood transfusion.
- Possible health issue.
- Test not collected correctly.

Please note re-test should occur as quickly as possible.

Additional Testing Monitored by Arkansas Department of Health Infant Programs

- Critical Congenital Heart Disease – simple test to check the oxygen levels in the blood while your baby is still in the hospital nursery.
- Hearing Screenings – provided while in the hospital and monitored by the Arkansas Department of Health's Infant Hearing Program.

Remember:

- Before you leave the hospital or birthing center, be sure to ask the nurse if your baby had their newborn screening tests.
- Upon initial visit with your baby's doctor ask about your baby's newborn screening results.



For more information call the Newborn Screening Program at (501) 280-4780 or go to www.healthy.arkansas.gov