

## Newborn Screening Program

### Frequently Asked Questions – Home Births/Birth Centers

#### **What is the goal of newborn screening?**

The goal of newborn screening is early identification of inherited medical conditions so that timely treatment and intervention can take place. Untreated, some of these conditions can cause death and disability.

#### **Why do babies need newborn screening tests?**

All babies need to be tested because a few babies look healthy but have a rare health problem. If found early, serious problems like mental retardation or death may be prevented.

#### **Is newborn screening required?**

Yes, New Hampshire's state law (RSA 132:10a) requires that all infants born in New Hampshire be screened.

#### **Can families refuse newborn screening?**

Yes, families can refuse newborn screening. If a family wishes to refuse screening they need to sign the [state refusal form](#) which is available on the state web site.

#### **Who is responsible for collecting the newborn screening specimen?**

According to NH state law, the person attending the birth is responsible for informing parents about newborn screening and collecting the newborn screening specimen.

#### **When should the specimen be collected?**

Specimens should be collected between 24-72 hours after birth. A few drops of blood are taken from the baby's heel, placed on a filter paper and sent to the screening laboratory for testing.

#### **How and when will I get results of the tests?**

Results are usually available 2-4 days after the specimen is received at the screening laboratory. Parents are notified of the results only if there is a problem. You should ask your provider about the results when you see him/her. Completed reports are sent to the provider responsible for collecting and submitting the specimen.

#### **Why do some babies need to be retested?**

Babies may be retested if the specimen was collected before the baby was 24 hours old. Some babies need to be retested because there was not enough of a blood sample to complete the required tests. A few babies need to be retested because the first test showed a possible health problem.

#### **What if a baby needs to be retested?**

The staff from the newborn screening program will contact your health professional or midwife if your baby needs to be retested. They will explain why the baby needs to be retested and how to do that. If a baby needs to be retested, it is important to have it done right away. It is important that your contact information is readily available and correct.

**What happens to the residual dried blood spot after testing is complete?**

The residual dried blood spot specimen is stored for six months at the laboratory and then it is destroyed. It cannot be used for any other purpose without written consent from the parent/guardian.

**What if I have additional questions?**

If you have additional questions, please contact the NH Newborn Screening Program at 1-800-852-3345 ext. 4225 (in state only) or 603 271-4225.

**Additional Resources:**

- March of Dimes: <http://www.marchofdimes.com/>
- National Newborn Screening and Genetics Resource Center (NNSGRC): <http://genes-r-us.uthscsa.edu/>
- Baby's First Test: <http://www.babysfirsttest.org/>
- Save Babies Through Screening Foundation (Video link): <http://www.savebabies.org/>
- NH Newborn Screening Program: <http://www.dhhs.state.nh.us/dphs/bchs/mch/newborn.htm>