

Blood Spot Newborn Screening for Your Baby

What is Newborn Screening? Newborn screening is a series of tests done on a few drops of blood from a heel stick that is placed on a blood spot collection form. These disorders may be inherited, and we know that some of these disorders can be more common in the Amish community. We know of 15 individuals in the Iowa Amish communities who have PKU that were found through newborn screening. If PKU goes untreated, it will cause permanent brain damage.

Why is Newborn Screening Important? Newborn screening can find disorders that, if found early, may save your baby's life. Treatment may prevent death or permanent disability (such as brain damage) for your baby. Even if your baby looks healthy and your other children are fine, we still recommend screening.

When Should Newborn Screening Be Done? Ideally, the screening should be done between 24-48 hours after birth. Some conditions may cause adverse effects days or weeks after birth. If that isn't possible, the sooner the screen can be collected the better. It is also critical that the collection form be delivered to the newborn screening laboratory as quickly as possible, ideally sent the same day or following day after collection.

How Do I Get My Baby's Screen to the Newborn Screening Laboratory? The newborn screening program has a courier service that can pick up the screen from your home, midwife, birth attendant, or birthing center. Please contact the State Hygienic Laboratory at 515-725-1630 to arrange a pick up using the courier service, CDS of Iowa. There is no fee to use the courier service. If using the courier isn't an option, please overnight mail the collection form in the envelope provided to the newborn screening laboratory in Ankeny, Iowa within 24 hours from collection.

How Much Does Newborn Screening Cost? The newborn screening fee is currently \$122. If you have the screen collected at a hospital, they may add on fees to cover the cost of the materials and labor. We are aware that some families have been charged a much higher fee for newborn screening. We are working on adding language to the Iowa laws to prevent this from happening. If you are self-paying for the newborn screen and would like their discounted rate, please let the hospital staff know. There is no additional charge if the screen is repeated.

What Do I Do if I Want My Baby Screened? Your birth attendant should have blood spot collection forms. If they do not, you can take your baby to the local hospital to have the screen done. Congratulations! You are doing the best for your baby.

What if I'm a Birth Attendant or a Midwife and I Want to Start Collecting Newborn Screens? Thank you! You are providing a great service for the babies you deliver! Please contact the Newborn Screening Laboratory by calling 515-725-1630 or write them at: Iowa Newborn Screening Laboratory, PO Box 249, Ankeny, IA 50021-0249 and ask for help to get started.

How Do I Contact the Iowa Newborn Screening Program? For collection or sample questions, please contact the newborn screening lab at 515-725-1630. For any medical question, please call the newborn screening follow up staff at 319-384-5097.