LOUISIANA NEWBORN SCREENING

What Families Need to Know

What are newborn screenings and why are they important?

Newborn screenings are state health services and part of the many things that will happen after a baby is born. Newborn screenings are important to help ensure babies have the healthiest possible start in life.

All states have systems to screen newborns for certain conditions.

More than 1 in 300 babies have a condition detectable by newborn screening.
babysfirsttest.org

Newborn screenings are important because they identify areas where your baby may need extra support. Newborn hearing screening, for example, ensures early opportunity for communication and language support for babies who are identified as deaf or hard of hearing. Testing a baby's blood may show if they need a special diet or other early treatment for genetic or metabolic conditions. Heart screening shows if a baby has an infection, breathing problems, or heart defect which all require further medical support.

The following information will help parents, caregivers, and families learn more about what to expect from newborn screenings in Louisiana. The Louisiana Department of Health, Office of Public Health, and Bureau of Family Health are here to support you, your child, and your family.

Newborn screening, or Baby's First Test, has three parts.
These tests usually take place at your bedside or in the nursery. These tests will not harm your baby.

Blood: A small blood sample is taken from your baby's heel and placed on a special paper card. It is then sent to a laboratory to see if there are any genetic or metabolic conditions that may need care right away.

Heart: A small, light sensor placed on your baby's hand or foot measures the amount of oxygen in your baby's blood. It can help detect heart problems.

Ears: Hearing screening equipment will be used to quickly and safely test your baby's hearing. This screening will let you know if your baby will need more testing when you leave the hospital.

The results from your baby's blood screening can take a few days. If the result is abnormal, you will be contacted by your baby's doctor or the state Newborn Screening Program. The results of the heart screening are immediate and the nursery staff will explain the results and any next steps you need to take, including a follow up appointment. The results of the hearing screening are immediate and will either be "pass" or "further testing needed." Nursery staff will explain the results. If further testing is needed, an appointment will be scheduled before you leave the hospital.

Do you want to learn more about newborn screening?

Scan the QR codes or visit the websites to get started!

Frequently asked questions are on the back of this page.

Expectinghealth.org - A digital learning book for expectant parents about newborn screening.

Babysfirsttest.org - Newborn screening information by state and resources for families with rare health conditions.

Newbornscreening.hrsa.gov - Newborn screening information by state and information about conditions that may be found.

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LOUISIANA NEWBORN SCREENING: Frequently Asked Questions

Do I have to ask for my newborn to be screened?
No. It is standard hospital procedure to screen every baby. You do have the right to opt out of screening.

When does newborn screening happen?
Screening usually takes place 24-48 hours after a baby is born.

Will my baby still get screened if I am not giving birth at a hospital (i.e. at home or a birthing center)?
The blood, heart, and hearing screening *may* be completed by a licensed midwife. If the screening cannot be completed in the home or birth center, you should work with a doctor to arrange a blood sample (also called heel stick) screening within the first few days after birth. A newborn hearing screening should also be completed as soon as possible, and no later than one month of age.

What kind of conditions are screened using my baby's blood sample?
Over 30 conditions are screened for using the heel stick. You can find out exactly which ones by using the QR code below for the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) Newborn Screening program.

How will I find out about the results of my baby's newborn screenings?
Hearing and heart results and next steps (such as an appointment for outpatient screening) are provided at the hospital before you and your baby are discharged. For heel stick, in most cases, you will not hear from your baby's doctor or the screening program unless further testing is needed. If you would like to confirm the results of your baby's screening, contact your pediatrician.

Does an abnormal result on the heel stick or heart screen mean my baby is sick?
Not necessarily, but there is a possibility your baby has a condition that will need special care right away. For example, phenylketonuria (PKU), caused by an enzyme defect, requires babies to have a special diet. Without treatment, PKU can affect the brain and cause developmental delays. It is **very important** that you follow up with your baby's doctor, attend scheduled follow-up appointments, and follow recommendations from your baby's provider to be sure your baby is receiving the care they need.

Does "needs further testing" on the hearing screen mean my child is deaf or hard of hearing (D/HH)?
Not necessarily, but there is a possibility - it is **very important** that you bring your baby for their outpatient screening and any other testing that is recommended to confirm your child's hearing levels after you leave the hospital. It is also important that you know help is immediately available if your baby is identified as D/HH to ensure your baby and family are supported. Follow the QR code below for the LDH Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) program to learn more.

What is cytomegalovirus (CMV)?
Your baby's doctor should test for cytomegalovirus (CMV) if your baby needs more hearing testing after their newborn hearing screening, or if certain other symptoms are present. CMV, a congenital condition (meaning present at birth), is not a part of the newborn screening panel. The timeframe for testing for congenital CMV is limited and should be completed as soon as possible before your baby is 3 weeks old. You can learn more about Louisiana's CMV screening law, Act 177, or about congenital CMV at www.nationalcmv.org.

What happens to my baby's blood sample after the screening is done?
Blood spot cards are kept in the state laboratory for a minimum of one year, and then destroyed.

LDH Newborn Screening Program webpage:
ldh.la.gov/page/newborn-screening
Newborn Screening Program Manager Phone: **(504) 568-8254**

LDH Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Program webpage:
ldh.la.gov/page/LouisianaEHDI
EHDI Program Manager Phone: **(504) 568-2876**

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