

# SPOTfocus

## Newborn Screening Quality Improvement Hints

*One reason specimens being unsatisfactory for testing is*

# SPECIMEN TOO OLD TO TEST UPON RECEIPT

For Texas DSHS Use Only

on or NO Newborn's Last Name is provided.

FORMATION

First Name/Twin A or B  
G I R L

Birth - Date	Military Time
0 8 1 1 2 1	0 8 0 0
Collection - Date	Military Time
0 8 1 2 2 1	0 8 0 0

77001

Specimens should be shipped to DSHS as soon as possible after they are dry. National recommendation is to have specimens received within 24 hours of collection. If received after 13 days from collection, specimens will be unsatisfactory for testing.

**If using Overnight/Priority Shipping (UPS, DHL, FedEx, etc.) use this address:**

*Texas Department of State Health Services  
Laboratory Services Section, MC 1947  
1100 W. 49th Street  
Austin, TX 78756-3199*

**If sending by regular mail, use this address:**

*Texas Department of State Health Services  
Laboratory Services Section, MC 1947  
PO Box 149341  
Austin, TX 78714-9341*

## TIPS TO ENSURE TIMELY RECEIPT OF SPECIMENS BY DSHS LABORATORY

- Ship specimens overnight
- Avoid holding or batching specimens.
- Assign a staff member to the following daily tasks:
  - Gather specimens 1 hour before scheduled courier pickup
  - Check specimen quality and demographic information for accuracy and legibility
  - Ensure all dried specimens are included in the next available shipment.
  - Ensure courier documentation is correct and complete
- Ensure all specimens have the correct name, date of birth, and date of collection before shipping. Incorrect or incomplete demographic information can lead to testing delays or rejection

**Shipping specimens by USPS Priority or Express Mail, UPS Next Day Air, FedEx Overnight, or other types of next day shipping, can help avoid delays.**



## Why is it important for specimens to arrive at the DSHS laboratory within thirteen days of specimen collection?

The quick delivery of specimens to the testing laboratory is imperative. It is important that submitting facilities are mindful of the time between collection and shipment for the following reasons:

- Finding and treating these disorders early can prevent serious complications, such as growth problems, developmental delays, deafness, blindness, intellectual disabilities, seizures, and sudden or early death. Some conditions may manifest with acute symptoms in the first days of life and require immediate treatment to reduce risk of morbidity and mortality.
- Based on CLIA and the equipment manufacturer's guidelines, the DSHS NBS Laboratory established a timeframe for specimen stability from the date of specimen collection.
- Specimens not received at the DSHS Laboratory within 13 days of collection will be unsatisfactory for testing and require a recollection.

View the National Newborn Screening Timeliness Goals here: <https://www.hrsa.gov/advisory-committees/heritable-disorders/newborn-screening-timeliness.html>

## Other Helpful Resources



**General newborn screening specimen collection questions:**  
[dshs.texas.gov/lab/nbs\\_collect\\_reqs.shtm](https://dshs.texas.gov/lab/nbs_collect_reqs.shtm)



**Newborn screening collection video:**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vxshWngJ114>



**Healthcare provider resources:**  
[dshs.texas.gov/lab/nbsHCRes.shtm](https://dshs.texas.gov/lab/nbsHCRes.shtm)



**DSHS Newborn Screening Laboratory Contact:**  
Email: [NewbornScreeningLab@dshs.state.tx.us](mailto:NewbornScreeningLab@dshs.state.tx.us)  
or call 1-888-963-7111 ext. 7333



**Monthly newborn screening facility report cards:**  
Sign up for Texas Newborn Screening Web Application (Neometrics) to access your facility's report card. Find the sign-up forms here:  
[dshs.texas.gov/laboratory-services/remote-data-systems](https://dshs.texas.gov/laboratory-services/remote-data-systems)

