



Newborn Screening is one of the most effective public health programs, saving hundreds of infants' lives every year.

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Since the screening process begins soon after birth, educating parents about the importance of newborn screening and what to expect before their baby leaves the hospital is a significant part of birth preparation.

### Best Practice Recommendation

Prenatal education about newborn screening for heritable and congenital disorders is a nationally recommended best practice. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists Committee on Genetics, [www.acog.org](http://www.acog.org), recommends that OB/GYN providers educate patients about newborn screening through informational materials and other resources, as well as through discussion during prenatal visits.

### Categories of Newborn Screening Disorders

- Organic acid disorders
- Fatty acid oxidation disorders
- Amino acid disorders
- Hemoglobinopathies (sickle cell disease)
- Endocrine disorders
- Other disorders

For more information on newborn screening, call the Texas Department of State Health Services Newborn Screening Program at 1-800-252-8023 ext. 3957.

For questions about disclosure and the retention of blood spot card records, call 1-888-963-7111 ext. 7333.

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Texas Department of State Health Services  
Newborn Screening Program  
P.O. Box 149347  
MC 1918  
Austin, Texas 78756  
[www.dshs.state.tx.us/newborn](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/newborn)



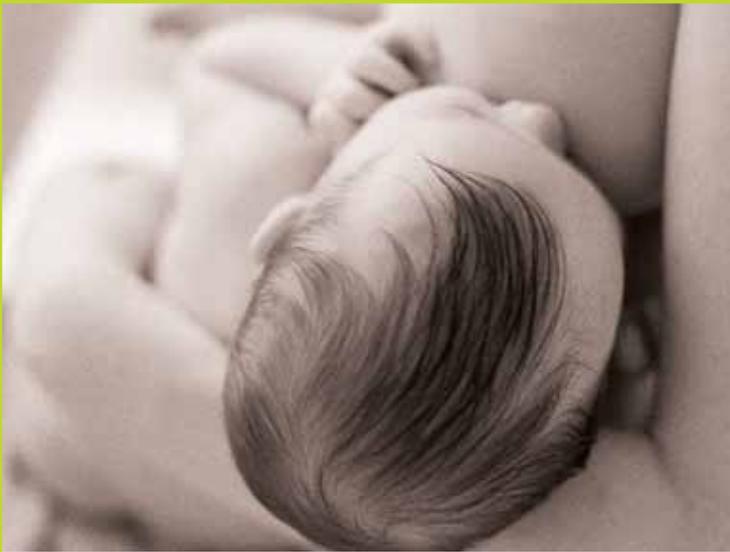
[www.txhealthsteps.com](http://www.txhealthsteps.com)

# Save Your Babies!

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# Newborn Screening Saves Lives.

*The Prenatal Provider's Role in Newborn Screening*



## Newborn Screening and You

The Texas Newborn Screening (NBS) Program tests all neonates for 28 rare disorders that, if identified and treated early, can prevent serious problems, such as intellectual disability, illness, or death. Texas babies are also screened for hearing loss at birth.

Prenatal providers have an important role in helping to educate patients about newborn screening prior to delivery. With new legislation requiring disclosure on the storage and potential use of their baby's test specimens after screening, it is even more vital that parents be informed earlier rather than right after birth, when they are being asked to make so many quick decisions.

This brochure provides information that will help you discuss newborn screening with your patients. While prenatal providers are not expected to be experts on the conditions screened by NBS, you should be aware of helpful resources. The Genetic Alliance ([www.geneticalliance.org](http://www.geneticalliance.org)) and the Save Babies Through Screening Foundation ([www.savebabies.org](http://www.savebabies.org)) are two national sources of information on the importance of newborn screening.

## 6 Things Expectant Parents Want to Know About Newborn Screening

1. A few babies who look healthy at birth can have a rare disorder. The screening tests check to see if your baby has one of 28 disorders.
2. Serious problems may be prevented if we find the disorders right away.
3. Babies are tested 1 to 2 days after birth and again at 7 to 14 days of age.
4. For the test, a health professional takes a few drops of blood from your baby's heel to put on a blood spot card.
5. Some babies may need more tests. The baby's health-care provider and/or parents will be notified if the baby needs more tests. It is very important to get these tests quickly.
6. After completion of newborn screening, the blood spot card is stored in a secure location, and the baby's information is kept confidential. If the parent/legal guardian does not want the blood samples to be kept, a form can be filled out that directs the lab to destroy the card after screening is completed. In June 2012, the state law will change so that permission must be obtained from the parent/legal guardian to retain the baby's blood samples after completion of the screening.

## Guidance on Patient Communication

You might find it best to relay the information as part of parent education while discussing your patient's birth plan. You can reassure expectant parents that the disorders are very rare, but finding them early and beginning treatment right away is very important to their baby's long-term health.

Since state law requires every newborn to be screened (unless the parent/legal guardian refuses for religious reasons), your patients will have the assurance that the screening tests are routine and can save lives.

Your patients will have more time before the newborn screen is collected to consider and decide whether they want their baby's blood spot card to be destroyed or kept. The stored blood spots have beneficial public health uses. A very small number (with parental consent) may be used in research to find new ways to diagnose and treat disorders and diseases.

Free provider and patient education materials on newborn screening are available to order online at [www.dshs.state.tx.us/newborn/pubs.shtml](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/newborn/pubs.shtml).