



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

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, 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
- Hearing
- Critical congenital heart disease
- 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.



Texas Department of State Health Services
Newborn Screening Program
MC 1918
P.O. Box 149347
Austin, Texas 78714-9347
www.dshs.state.tx.us/newborn



Save Your Babies!

Newborn Screening Saves Lives.

The Prenatal Provider's Role in Newborn Screening



Texas Newborn Screening

- ◆ Tests all neonates for a number of rare disorders
- ◆ If identified and treated early, serious problems such as intellectual disability, illness, or death can be prevented
- ◆ Texas babies are also screened at birth for hearing and critical congenital heart disease, called point-of-service screens

Prenatal Providers Have an Important Role

- ◆ To educate patients about newborn screening prior to delivery
- ◆ To inform patients that newborn screening tests are routine and can save lives
- ◆ To reassure patients 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
- ◆ To inform parents that they will be asked to make a decision regarding potential use of their baby's specimens after screening is completed

7 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 the 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. Other tests, called point-of-service screens, are administered at the hospital.
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 cards are stored for up to 2 years, and may be used to ensure laboratory tests, equipment, and supplies are working right; to develop new tests; and for the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) studies of diseases that affect public health.

7. If the parent/legal guardian gives his or her OK, the blood spot cards will be stored for up to 25 years, and they may be used for public health research outside of DSHS. The parent/legal guardian decides what the lab does with the baby's blood spots after testing by completing and sending in a decision form. The decision form will be given to the parent/legal guardian when the blood spots are collected. The baby's information stays private and secure no matter the decision.

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 start the conversation by asking expectant parents what they know about newborn screening. Reassure them that the disorders are very rare, but finding them early can prevent serious problems.

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.

Providing information early will give your patients more time to consider and decide whether they want their baby's blood spot cards to be stored for up to 25 years and possibly used for public health research outside of DSHS.

Free provider and patient education materials on newborn screening are available to order online at www.dshs.state.tx.us/newborn/pubs.shtm.

Additional Resources for Newborn Screening Information

Prenatal providers are not expected to be experts on conditions screened by newborn screening. Resources available to you and your patients include:

- ◆ Texas Newborn Screening Program www.dshs.state.tx.us/newborn
- ◆ Genetic Alliance geneticalliance.org
- ◆ Save Babies Through Screening Foundation savebabies.org
- ◆ Babysfirsttest.org
- ◆ NewSteps.org