

SP Tfocus

Newborn Screening Quality Improvement Hints

One reason for unsatisfactory newborn screening specimens is that

BLOOD DID NOT COMPLETELY FILL SPECIMEN CIRCLES



TIPS TO ENSURE A COMPLETELY FILLED SPECIMEN CIRCLE

- Lightly touch the filter paper with a large drop of blood while watching it **soak through completely** from the opposite side.
- If the first drop of blood does not fill the circle completely, quickly express another blood drop and continue to fill the same circle.
- Ensure that each circle is completely filled, one at a time.
- Avoid going back to a previously filled spot and applying more blood to the filter paper. This often causes the blood to cake or clot.
- Completely fill all five circles to give the state laboratory enough blood to test for all of the genetic disorders.
- Store Newborn Screening kits and collected specimens away from sunlight.

In 2020, over 250 newborn screening specimens were rejected because the blood did not completely fill the specimen circles. All of these specimens required a recollection and caused critical delays to testing.



Why will a specimen that did not completely fill the circles be unsatisfactory for testing?

When all circles are not filled, there will not be enough blood for the laboratory to punch samples with automated equipment. Without a sufficient amount of blood, the laboratory will be unable to complete all tests; therefore, these specimens will be unsatisfactory for testing.

Other Helpful Resources



General newborn screening specimen collection questions:

dshs.texas.gov/lab/nbs_collect_reqs.shtm



Newborn screening collection video:

<https://clsi.org/nbs01-gate/>



Healthcare provider resources:

dshs.texas.gov/lab/nbsHCRes.shtm



DSHS Newborn Screening Laboratory Contact:

Email: NewbornScreeningLab@dshs.texas.gov 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:

<https://www.dshs.texas.gov/laboratory-services/remote-data-systems>

