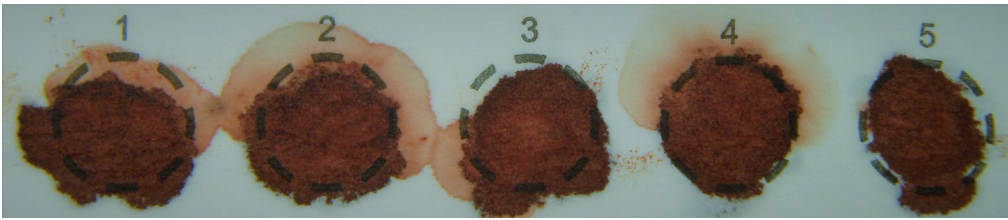


# SP Tfocus

## Newborn Screening Quality Improvement Hints

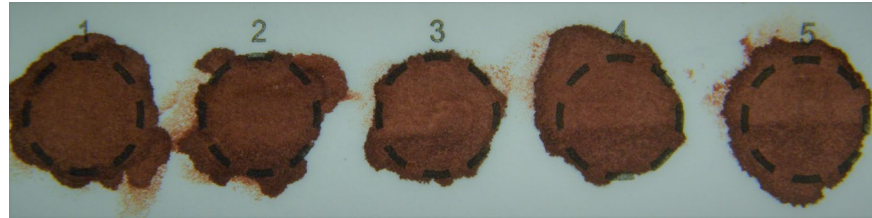
*One reason for unsatisfactory newborn screening specimens is*

## SPECIMEN APPEARED CONTAMINATED OR DISCOLORED



**Example of  
Contamination**

**Example of  
Discoloration**



### TIPS TO AVOID A CONTAMINATED OR DISCOLORED SPECIMEN

- Do not store specimens near areas where food, beverages or other possible contaminants are kept.
- Do not allow filter paper to come in contact with alcohol, antiseptic solutions, water, hand lotions or powders. Avoid excessive handling of the specimen collection form. If necessary, handle with clean gloves, avoiding the circle collection areas.
- After collection site has been cleaned, wipe area DRY with a sterile gauze pad or air dry before applying each blood drop to filter paper.
- Air dry specimen for 3 to 4 hours on a flat, nonabsorbent surface in a horizontal position before mailing (do not hang specimens to dry, do not dry specimens vertically on edge, and do not lay specimens to dry such that the blood specimen is in direct contact with any surface).
- Store unused Newborn Screening kits and collected specimens away from sunlight.
- Do not place specimens in sealed plastic bags.

**In 2020, over 230 newborn screening specimens were rejected because the blood appeared contaminated or discolored. All of these specimens required a recollection and caused critical delays to testing.**



## Why is a specimen that appeared contaminated or discolored rejected?

Contaminants can interfere with the test method and discoloration indicates an uneven application of blood on the filter paper, both can cause inaccurate test results. 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](https://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](https://dshs.texas.gov/lab/nbsHCRes.shtm)



**DSHS Newborn Screening Laboratory Contact:**

Email: [NewbornScreeningLab@dshs.texas.gov](mailto: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>

