Laboratory Tests That Make Sense for Your Baby

Colorado began screening all infants for disease in 1979. Through the Newborn Screening Laboratory, hundreds of Colorado children have received early diagnosis and treatment for conditions that, if untreated, would lead to devastating illness, severe mental retardation, or death.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Who is Tested?
All newborns.
When is testing Done?
At the hospital, a few drops of blood are drawn from the baby's heel, put on special paper, and sent to the laboratory. All babies are tested again at their first well baby visit (usually by 2 weeks of age).
What are babies tested for?

THE SEVEN CONDITIONS IN COLORADO'S NEWBORN SCREENING PROGRAM

What Conditions Can These Tests Detect?	***How Often Does It Occur in Colorado?***	***What Happens If It Is Not Found and Treated?***
Phenylketonuria (PKU)	One in 15,000 newborns	Children become mentally retarded.
Galactosemia	One in 70,000 newborns	Children become very sick, have liver and eye damage, and become mentally retarded.
Hypothyroidism	One in 4,500 newborns	Children do not grow and develop properly, and they become mentally retarded.
Sickle Cell Anemia	One in every 500 black newborns, less common in other ethic groups.	Children have frequent problems with infections, growth, anemia, and recurring episodes of pain.
Cystic Fibrosis	One in 3,000 newborns	Children have problems with growth and lung infections.
Biotinidase Deficiency	One in 40,000 newborns	Children may have seizures, mental retardation, hair loss, skin rashes and sudden death.
Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia	One in 10,000 newborns	Children (especially girls) may show ambiguous genitalia; be unable to retain salt which can cause severe illness and death if undetected, have excessive growth at an early age, but very short adult stature.

Why Should Babies Be Tested?

Babies with these conditions appear normal at birth. If untreated, these conditions will affect the baby's brain or physical development, or cause other medical problems. These conditions can begin to affect the baby in the first days or weeks of life. By testing all newborns, babies with these conditions can be found early. Early diagnosis and treatment can result in normal growth and development, or prevent many of the medical problems associated with these conditions.

Why Should Babies Be Tested a Second Time?

Most babies get these first newborn screening test before they are two days old. Sometimes these early test results are not accurate because the baby is too young. Some conditions may not be detected on the first screen. Therefore, all babies must be tested a second time, usually at the first well baby visit (by 2 weeks of age).

How Will Test Results Be Given?

Your baby's doctor will receive a report of the results. You may ask for the results when you bring your baby in for a check-up. You will be notified by your doctor if additional testing is required.

Additional testing does not necessarily mean that your child has one of these conditions, but it does mean that more testing is needed to see if your baby has a problem. When this testing is completed your doctor is notified promptly.

If you have questions or concerns about newborn screening, contact your baby's doctor.