



Genesee County Health Department

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Re: Newborn Screening Month

The Genesee County Health Department reminds you that September is Newborn Screening Month. Newborn screenings are tests that check for diseases or disorders in newborn babies. Most tests are done before the baby leaves the hospital.

Newborn screenings let doctors find problems early and start treatment to keep the baby healthy. They don't cause any harm or risk to the baby.

All states require newborn screening. But, the number and types of tests vary from state to state. Depending on your family health history, you may want to ask for extra tests.

Most newborn screening tests use a few drops of blood taken from the heel of the baby's foot. The same sample of blood can be used to test for many different diseases, including:

- **Hypothyroid disorder** – The thyroid is a gland in the neck that makes hormones. Hypothyroid disorder can cause problems with growth and development, but it can be treated if it's found early.
- **PKU (phenylketonuria)** - PKU means babies can't process certain foods and must be fed special formula. It can cause intellectual disability (mental skills that are below average) if it's not treated early.

Better Life Through Better Health

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- **Sickle cell disease** – This is a serious blood disorder that can be watched and treated if it's found early.
- **Hearing loss** – A hearing test uses a small microphone or earphone to check how the baby responds to sounds. Finding out early if the baby has hearing loss can help reduce or avoid speech and language delays. If your hospital doesn't screen for hearing loss, make sure to have the baby's hearing checked within the first month. It's also important to have the baby's hearing checked regularly, since some hearing loss starts after the time when newborn screening tests are done.
- **Heart defects** – Heart defects (problems with the heart) can cause serious problems or death if they're not found and treated early. Testing for heart defects uses a small sensor that is placed on the baby's hand or foot. The test is painless and only takes a few minutes.

If you are pregnant, talk with your doctor about newborn screening before your baby is born.

Our motto is **Better Life through Better Health.**