



NHS newborn screening

What to do if your child (under one) has missed screening tests: info for parents

Screening in the NHS

Newborn screening tests are used to find babies at higher chance of certain health problems. This means they can get earlier, potentially more effective treatment. It also means that as parents you can make better informed decisions about their health.

The NHS offers parents a number of screening tests for their newborn babies. You can see a list of the conditions screened for on the back of this information sheet.

Screening is always a choice. You can discuss each test with health professionals and decide, based on your own circumstances, whether or not it is right for you and your child.

Missed tests

For babies born in England, it is very rare for them not to be offered screening. But sometimes we do find children with no record of newborn screening.

This area has been checking whether all the children who live here have up to date screening records. We've found that your child's records are missing or incomplete. This may mean your child has not had these checks.



A baby having their hearing screening test

Screening is important

Most types of newborn screening can still be carried out on children under a year of age. If your child is developing normally it is unlikely they will have one of the conditions screened for. But screening is still important.

If you do have any concerns about your child's health then we can investigate these and provide any necessary advice.

Your GP or health visitor will be in touch to discuss these issues with you and offer the appropriate screening tests.

If you have any immediate concerns please contact your GP surgery.

Conditions screened for in newborn babies

Heart, eyes, hips and testes

Within 72 hours of giving birth, parents are offered a physical examination for their baby. This includes screening tests to find out whether the baby has a problem with their eyes, heart, hips or, in boys, their testes. Early investigation and possible treatment can then take place.

The screening tests are carried out again between 6 and 8 weeks of age as some conditions do not develop or appear until then.

Find out more at www.nhs.uk/newborninfantexam

Hearing loss

The newborn hearing screening test is usually carried out within the first few weeks of life. It will often happen before you leave the maternity unit. In some areas it will be carried out at home or in a clinic. Screening is most effective for babies younger than 3 months. Older babies may need to be tested by the local audiology department.

Screening is important because hearing loss is not always apparent. As an additional check, you can use the **making sounds** and **reactions to sounds** checklists in your Personal Child Health Record ('red book') to help monitor your child's development.

Find out more at www.nhs.uk/newbornhearing

Blood spot

The newborn blood spot test is usually carried out on day 5 after birth. The blood is tested to see if the child has one of 9 serious but rare medical conditions.

These are:

- sickle cell disease (SCD)
- cystic fibrosis (CF)
- congenital hypothyroidism (CHT)
- phenylketonuria (PKU)
- medium-chain acyl-CoA dehydrogenase deficiency (MCADD)
- maple syrup urine disease (MSUD)
- isovaleric acidaemia (IVA)
- glutaric aciduria type 1 (GA1)
- homocystinuria (HCU)

If your child is well and is developing normally it is unlikely that they have any of these conditions, though problems may not be apparent. Screening is therefore still important. You should contact your GP if your child is slow to develop, has regular diarrhoea or repeated chest infections.

Find out more at www.nhs.uk/bloodspot

For more information, or if you have questions, you can:

- download the **Screening Tests For Your and Your Baby** leaflet (search for it on www.gov.uk)
- visit www.nhs.uk/screening
- speak to your GP or Health Visitor
- look at the information in your Personal Child Health Record ('red book')