

Argininosuccinic Acidemia (ASA)

(Are-gin-in-o-suk-sin-ic acid-ee-me-ah)

What is a positive newborn screen?

Newborn screening is done on tiny samples of blood taken from your baby's heel 24 to 48 hours after birth. Newborn screening tests for rare, hidden disorders that may affect your baby's health and development. The newborn screen suggests your baby might have a disorder called ASA.

A positive newborn screen does not mean your baby has ASA, but it does mean your baby needs more testing to know for sure.

Your baby's doctor will help arrange for more testing by specialists in disorders like ASA.

What is ASA?

A person with ASA doesn't have enough enzyme to remove ammonia from the body. Ammonia is very harmful and can cause health problems if it isn't removed from the body everyday.

ASA is a disorder that is passed on, or inherited, from a child's mother and father. Because ASA is a genetic disease, family members are at risk of having ASA too, even if no one in the family has had it before.

What problems can ASA cause?

ASA is different for each child. Some children have a mild form of ASA with fewer health problems, while other children may have a severe form of ASA with serious complications.

If severe ASA is not treated, a child might develop:

- Feeding problems
- Sleepiness
- Vomiting
- Muscle weakness
- Seizures
- Swelling of the brain
- Coma

It is very important to follow the doctor's instructions for testing and treatment.

What is the treatment for ASA?

ASA can be treated. The treatment is life-long. Treatment for children with ASA can include:

- Medications to help prevent high ammonia
- Special formula low in protein
- Low protein diet - a dietician will help you set up the best diet for your child

Children with ASA should see their regular doctor, a doctor who specializes in ASA, and a dietician.

Children with ASA can benefit from prompt and careful treatment.

Resources for parents

National Organization for Rare Disorders
www.rarediseases.org

National Urea Cycle Disorders Foundation
www.nucdf.org

MN Children & Youth with Special Health Needs
(651) 201-3650 or (800) 728-5420

MN Newborn Screening Program
www.health.state.mn.us/newbornscreening