

# A Parent's Guide to Newborn Screening (5:11)

MARCH OF DIMES

**Female Narrator:** If you're pregnant or have a partner who is pregnant, you probably want a perfect world for your future child.

**First couple (female speaking):** I want her to be healthy.

**Second couple (female speaking):** I want my baby boy to be happy and healthy.

**Third couple (male speaking):** I want her to be compassionate.

**Fourth (male speaking):** I'd like the child to grow up to be whatever it dreams to be in life, and achieve all its dreams, no matter what it is.

**Female narrator:** Above all, your child's health is the most important thing.

(0:40)

## A TEST THAT CAN SAVE YOUR BABY'S LIFE

**Female narrator:** Newborn screening is a public health program that helps to promote your baby's health by testing your child for some rare disorders shortly after birth. These tests are required by the state.

(0:55)

**Dr. Jessica Davis, Associate Professor of Clinical Pediatrics, Weill College of Medicine, Cornell**

**University:** All newborn babies before they leave the hospital are tested for a variety of conditions, some of which are uncommon, and some of which are more common.

**Female narrator:** All newborns are tested because a few babies look healthy but have a medical condition.

**Dr. Nereida Correa, Associate Professor of Clinical Obstetrics and Gynecology, Albert Einstein College of Medicine:** Most babies are healthy when they're born, but we test all babies because some babies have rare health problems that can be identified by tests.

**Female narrator:** Serious problems, such as mental retardation or even death, can be prevented if we find out about these problems right away.

**Dr. Jessica Davis, Associate Professor of Clinical Pediatrics, Weill College of Medicine, Cornell**

**University:** The whole purpose of newborn screening is to identify infants at risk for serious medical problems, and the faster we do that, the better it is for the child.

(1:37)

**Female narrator:** Within the first two days of your baby's life, a nurse or technician will take a routine sample of blood to send to the lab for testing.

**Dr. Jessica Davis, Associate Professor of Clinical Pediatrics, Weill College of Medicine, Cornell University:** These tests are simple. All that's involved is a heel stick. A trained nurse practitioner will extract a few drops of blood onto a piece of paper, which allows the blood to spread out in little discs. There's a little band aid put on the heel, and life goes on as normal.

**Female narrator:** Some babies will need to be retested. If your baby requires a retest, you'll be notified. Before you leave the hospital, make sure the hospital knows how to contact you.

**Dr. Nereida Correa, Associate Professor of Clinical Obstetrics and Gynecology, Albert Einstein College of Medicine:** If the baby needs to be retested, it doesn't mean that the test is abnormal. It just means that it's possible that they didn't get enough blood or that the results were inconclusive.

**Female narrator:** If your baby needs to be retested, it is very important to get retested quickly.

(2:30)

**Female narrator:** Here are some important things all parents should know about newborn screening. All newborns are required to get tested for some rare disorders before they leave the hospital. Babies with these disorders may look healthy at birth. Serious problems can be prevented if we find out about the disorders right away. To do the test, the nurse will take a few drops of blood from your baby's heel. Your baby's doctor in the hospital will get a copy of the results. Ask about the results when you see your baby's doctor. Some babies will need to be retested. Talk to your baby's doctor if you have any questions.

**Dr. Jessica Davis, Associate Professor of Clinical Pediatrics, Weill College of Medicine, Cornell University:** If there's any question in your mind or something that you don't understand, even if you're asking it for the third or fourth time, it's okay. But it's important to communicate with your physician – with the baby's physician.

(3:22)

**Female narrator:** Perhaps you're about to become a parent for the first time.

**Female parent-to-be:** The best weeks are when you hit certain milestones like feeling the baby move for the first time. This has been a great pregnancy, and I just can't wait to see her in a couple weeks.

**Female narrator:** Maybe you've had children before. Either way, you know that your children will depend on you to keep them healthy. And with programs like newborn screening, we can ensure the health of generations to come.

(3:55)

**Female narrator:** For more information about newborn screening, talk to your doctor or your baby's doctor. You can also learn more about newborn screening through the [March of Dimes website](#). To learn more about which tests your state provides, contact the [National Newborn Screening and Genetics Resource Center](#), which can also be reached through the March of Dimes website. The March of Dimes is a non-profit organization whose mission is to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects, premature birth, and infant mortality.

(4:27 speech stops)