

Newborn Screening during COVID-19 pandemic

During this time of extraordinary challenge, the UDOH Newborn Screening Program appreciates the dedication and commitment of healthcare providers to ensure the best possible outcomes for Utah newborns.

Has the UDOH Newborn Screening (NBS) Program altered guidance for collection of newborn screens?

No. All babies are required to have two routine screens, one at 24 hours of life and a second between 7 and 16 days of age or generally at the 2 week well child check-up. UDOH recognizes that healthcare providers may require flexibility in patient scheduling.

What if a 2nd NBS cannot be collected in the timeframe of 7-16 days of age?

As the second newborn screen is essential to having valid and complete results, collect the second screen as close to the 7-16 day timeframe as possible. This ensures the earliest possible intervention for at-risk newborns. Also keep in mind, tests are validated for the newborn period and are not as effective in identifying older infants with certain disorders.

What if the parent refuses the 2nd NBS?

Parents can only refuse to have their child screened on the grounds that they are members of a specified, well-recognized religious organization whose teachings are contrary to the tests required (see Utah Code 26-10-6). To refuse, a parent must sign a form stating he/she has a religious objection to newborn screening.

Points to consider before refusing a second newborn screening:

- UDOH NBS has implemented a two-screen system to maximize the effectiveness of testing for all disorders on the Utah NBS panel.
- There is a risk that CAH and Congenital Hypothyroidism may be missed if the second screen is not done.
- Some disorders, such as cystic fibrosis, rely upon both newborn screens to reduce the number of false positives.

What if our facility is unable to provide a location to collect the 2nd NBS or recall specimen?

If necessary, explore the availability of other collection locations such as an outpatient clinic or reference laboratory. If no alternative can be identified, ensure a screen is collected as soon as can be safely scheduled. Also, contact the UDOH Newborn Screening program at 801-584-8256, we may be able to help.

What if a parent requires early discharge to socially isolate themselves and their newborn?

Collect the first screen immediately, prior to discharge

What if the 1st NBS was out of range or unsatisfactory?

Having an unsatisfactory screen is like not being screened at all. It is imperative to ensure that another screen is collected as quickly as possible.

When a 1st NBS is out of range, a timely 2nd NBS is important to determine if additional diagnostic evaluation is necessary.

In order to avoid delays, please completely and accurately fill out all information on the newborn screening card. Missing information causes delays. Ensure parent information and follow-up provider is correct.

Collect a sample that is suitable for testing – one large drop of blood per circle. Inspect both sides of the card to ensure the blood has soaked through to the other side. Repeat collections due to an unsatisfactory specimen cause delays and require repeat clinic or hospital visits.