



TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING NEWBORN SCREENING RESULTS

How newborn screening results are communicated shapes family understanding, trust, and follow-up. Families remember not just what was said, but how it made them feel. Intentional word choice reduces confusion and anxiety, supports timely action, and strengthens confidence in the screening system.

CORE PRINCIPLES



**Empathetic
Listening**



**Screening vs
Diagnosis (its not
a final result)**



**Urgency
without Alarm**

This card provides **practical phrases** and tips you can use across care settings **to deliver results with clarity and compassion.**



Step	Recommended Approach (Say This) 	What to Avoid (Not That) 
Naming	Your baby's screen shows he/she is at risk for [Condition Name]."	Abbreviations of vague terms like "the PKU test".
Context	"This doesn't mean a diagnosis; we need more testing to be certain."	"Your baby's result is abnormal" or "failed".
Reassurance	"Many babies are healthy, but follow-up is essential."	Dismissive phrases like "don't worry" or "probably nothing".
Next Steps	"We'd like to arrange lab work/refer you to on [date]. Any barriers to getting there?"	Scaring families into thinking there is "immediate danger".
Understanding	"What will you tell your family/friend about our call?" (Teach-back concept)	Assuming they understand everything without restating.
Conclusion	"Questions often come up later. Reach us at [phone number]."	Vague endings like "We will be in touch"

Checklist for Successful Results Delivery



Prepare: Ensure time for the call (don't rush) and prepare what you plan to share.

Clarify: Confirm specific condition result and have next steps ready.

Listen: Ask questions often to assess both the family's knowledge and emotional responses.

Support: Provide specific contacts for specialists and resources.

