



# patient education **Fact Sheet**

PFS006: These Tests Could Save Your Baby's Life: Newborn Screening Tests December 2014

## These Tests Could Save Your Baby's Life: Newborn Screening Tests

### Why does my baby need newborn screening tests?

Although most babies are healthy when they are born, every U.S. state requires that newborn screening tests be performed on all babies to identify those that may look healthy but have a rare and serious health problem. If problems are found early, treatment can help prevent serious medical problems or death.

### How will my baby be tested?

Before you leave the hospital, a nurse will take a few drops of blood from your baby's heel. The hospital will send the blood sample to a newborn screening lab. In addition, your baby will be screened for hearing loss with one or two quick noninvasive tests using a tiny earphone, microphone, or both. A painless pulse oximetry test using skin sensors also will be performed to measure the oxygen levels in your baby's blood. Low blood oxygen levels can be a sign of a serious heart defect that can be corrected with surgery.

### How will I get the results of the test?

The results of some tests (eg, hearing and pulse oximetry) may be available before you leave the hospital. Blood test results will be available from your baby's health care provider after you leave the hospital. You will be notified by your baby's health care provider or state health department if further testing is needed. Ask about results when you see your baby's health care provider. Make sure that your hospital and your baby's health care provider have your correct address and phone number.

### Why do some babies need to be retested?

Your baby may need to be retested if you leave the hospital before the baby is 24 hours old. Some states require a second test on all babies. Some babies need to be retested because not enough blood was collected, the results of the test were unclear, or the first test showed a possible health problem. Retesting does not necessarily mean that your child will have a health problem.

### What if my baby needs to be retested?

Your baby's health care provider or the state health department will contact you if your baby needs to be retested. They will tell you why your baby needs to be retested and what to do next. If your baby needs to be retested, get it done right away.

### What if I have questions?

Ask your baby's health care provider if you have questions or concerns. There may be other tests that you would like your baby to have besides those required in your state. For more information, contact your state health department's newborn screening program, or visit Baby's First Test online at [www.babysfirsttest.org](http://www.babysfirsttest.org).

**PFS006:** Designed as an aid to patients, this document sets forth current information and opinions related to women's health. The information does not dictate an exclusive course of treatment or procedure to be followed and should not be construed as excluding other acceptable methods of practice. Variations, taking into account the needs of the individual patient, resources, and limitations unique to the institution or type of practice, may be appropriate.

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