

Congratulations!

Congratulations on the birth of your baby! This guide explains several early screening tests and services that Rhode Island offers for newborns. Before leaving the hospital, your baby will have these screening tests to detect serious conditions that may affect his or her health and development. All conditions identified through these screenings can be treated if found early. You do not have to pay for any of these screenings.



Family Health Information Line

If you need more information about any of the newborn screening services or programs described in this guide, call the Family Health Information Line, toll-free, at 1-800-942-7434, weekdays from 8:30am to 4:30pm. Our team speaks English and Spanish.

MAKE HEALTH PART OF YOUR FAMILY

RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Newborn Screening and Services

A guide to tests, screenings,
and programs for newborns.





Newborn Blood Screening

Before your baby leaves the hospital, a few drops of blood will be taken from your baby's heel. The blood will be tested for metabolic (how the body digests food), endocrine (controls many body functions) and hemoglobin (blood) conditions (refer to insert for more details about the conditions). Newborn blood screening is required by law. Blood samples are stored until your baby reaches adulthood. To refuse, you must sign a waiver stating that you understand the risk of not having the test done.

The newborn blood screening should be done when your baby is at least 24 hours old. If your baby leaves the hospital before this time, you will have to bring your baby back for the test. Sometimes, a test may need to be repeated. This does not necessarily mean that your baby has a condition. If your baby's test needs to be repeated, a doctor or nurse will call and tell you. The test needs to be repeated as soon as possible. It is best to do this at the hospital where your baby was born, but you can go to the lab at any maternity hospital in Rhode Island.

Results from these tests are reported to your baby's doctor. Tests are available for many conditions beyond those included in Rhode Island's Newborn Screening Program. These additional tests are available for a fee through other labs. If you would like to have your baby receive additional testing, speak with a doctor or nurse while you are in the hospital about the tests and where you can get them done.

Newborn Hearing Screening

During your hospital stay, your baby's hearing will be screened to measure how the ear responds to soft sounds. A small microphone is put in your baby's ear. The screening takes 10 to 15 minutes and does not hurt. If the results are not clear the test may need to be repeated. If this is needed, the Rhode Island Hearing Assessment Program will contact you. Bring your baby back to the hospital for the repeat test as soon as possible.

If the screening test shows that your baby might have hearing loss, or your baby has any other risk factors for hearing loss, the Hearing Assessment Program will recommend that you take your baby to a hearing specialist (audiologist) for more testing at six months of age. You will receive a letter from the Program reminding you to make this appointment.

Family Outreach Program

While you and your baby are in the hospital, a nurse will review your pregnancy and delivery records. They will look to see if there are any reasons your baby's development could be delayed.

Family Outreach offers information and help with many of the challenges of bringing baby home, from breastfeeding support to making your home safe for your baby.

Based on the review of your records, the nurse may refer you to the Family Outreach Program, a home visiting program for families with newborns and young children at no cost to the family. The program offers information on how to care for your baby including topics such as breastfeeding and nutrition, when to call your baby's doctor, and how to make



your home safe for your baby. Home visitors provide support and link you to resources in your community that help you and your baby get off to a healthy start.

While you are in the hospital, a nurse from the Family Outreach Program may stop in to tell you more about it. If they don't see you while you are in the hospital, they may call you to schedule a home visit. If you are not offered a home visit but would like one, call the Family Health Information Line at 1-800-942-7434, weekdays from 8:30am to 4:30pm.

Birth Defects Program

Babies identified with birth defects in the newborn period are included in the Birth Defect Information System at the Department of Health. The Birth Defects Program helps make sure that families and their children receive appropriate services and referrals. This information is also used to study patterns of birth defects. All information in the registry is confidential and is protected under State and Federal privacy laws.

KIDSNET

All babies born in Rhode Island are enrolled in KIDSNET, the Rhode Island information system that helps families and doctors make sure that children receive complete preventive health care.

KIDSNET contains information from your child's birth certificate and information such as your name, address, and your child's doctor. As your baby grows, your doctor and others will add your child's immunizations and information from the following health screenings: developmental assessment, newborn hearing, newborn blood screening, and lead screening. Information from the Family Outreach, Early Intervention, and WIC Programs is also in KIDSNET.

KIDSNET is used to remind families and doctors when immunizations, lead screenings, and other services are needed. If your child has been to different doctors, KIDSNET will keep track of all of his or her immunizations in one place. KIDSNET also helps to see whether all Rhode Island children are getting the care they need.

KIDSNET information is confidential and is protected under State and Federal privacy laws. Only the Health Department, doctors, nurses, and other approved professionals such as school nurses or the Head Start Program can see KIDSNET information. You have the right to see your child's information. If you feel the information is incorrect or incomplete, you have the right to ask that it be changed. You also have the right to restrict who can see your child's information. For details about how to do this, call KIDSNET at 401-222-4220, weekdays from 8:30am to 4:00pm.

