



Kentucky Public Health

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Newborn Screening Critical for Kentucky's Babies *52 Weeks of Public Health Spotlight: Newborn Screening Awareness Month*



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FRANKFORT, Ky. (September 13, 2017) – As part of the 52 Weeks of Public Health campaign, the Kentucky Department for Public Health (DPH) within the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS) is celebrating Newborn Screening Awareness Month by promoting awareness about the importance of early screening for Kentucky babies.

The Newborn Screening Program is a population-based service, provided by the Kentucky Department for Public Health that provides testing for developmental, genetic, and metabolic disorders in newborn babies, allowing steps to be taken before symptoms develop.

Newborn screening detects conditions not visible at birth, and ensures life-saving treatment can begin as soon as possible. Most of these illnesses are very rare, but can be treated if caught early. The types of newborn screening tests done vary from state to state, however, all 50 states have reported screening for at least 26 disorders on an expanded and standardized uniform panel.

In Kentucky, newborn screening is required by law. Between 24-48 hours of life, a blood specimen is obtained by heel stick from the newborn at the birthing facility. The specimen is sent to the Kentucky Division of Laboratory Services for processing and abnormal findings are reported to the Newborn Screening Program.

Kentucky's Newborn Screening Program uses a metabolic panel screening for 53 disorders which includes: congenital, hypothyroidism, cystic fibrosis, abnormalities in hemoglobin i.e. sickle cell, and disorders in the metabolism of carbohydrates, amino acid, organic acids, fatty acids, and lysosomes. When a diagnosis is confirmed, treatment is initiated through the administration of drugs, hormones, or dietary adjustments.

Even if a baby is not born in a hospital, it is critical that they be tested within the first 24-48 hours after birth. Over 50,000 newborn screenings are conducted annually in the state of Kentucky. In 2016, 141 newborns tested were positively diagnosed as a result of the initial newborn screening. In addition to blood tests, screening for hearing loss and critical congenital heart disease (CCHD) are highly recommended for all Kentucky babies.

To learn more about the benefits of the Kentucky Newborn Screening Program, please visit the [Kentucky Department for Public Health](#) or visit the [Centers for Disease Control & Prevention](#) website.

Interested in learning more about healthy Kentucky lifestyle? Through our 52 Weeks of Public Health campaign, the Kentucky Department for Public Health will spotlight public health issues as well as highlight services and resources available to Kentuckians statewide. Follow us on [Facebook](#) for your weekly tip.