

Newborn bloodspot screening

The 'heel prick test'

What is newborn bloodspot screening (NBS)?

Also known as the 'heel prick test', NBS identifies babies at risk of having rare but serious health conditions. These conditions can affect your baby's health if not identified and treated early. NBS is the world's most successful public health program. We have been looking after the health of Victorian babies since 1966.

NBS is about early testing, early detection and early action.

Where can I find more information?

For more information you can speak to your midwife or visit our website: Newborn screening at VCGS vcgs.org.au/newborn-bloodspot-screening

For the list of conditions visit: www.health.gov.au/our-work/newborn-bloodspot-screening/what-is-screened

What is the NBS process?

Sample collection

When your baby is 36-72 hours old, some drops of blood will be collected from the heel.

This small heel prick is safe, quick, and part of routine newborn care.



Check out this short video that shows how the sample will be collected. vcgs.org.au/video

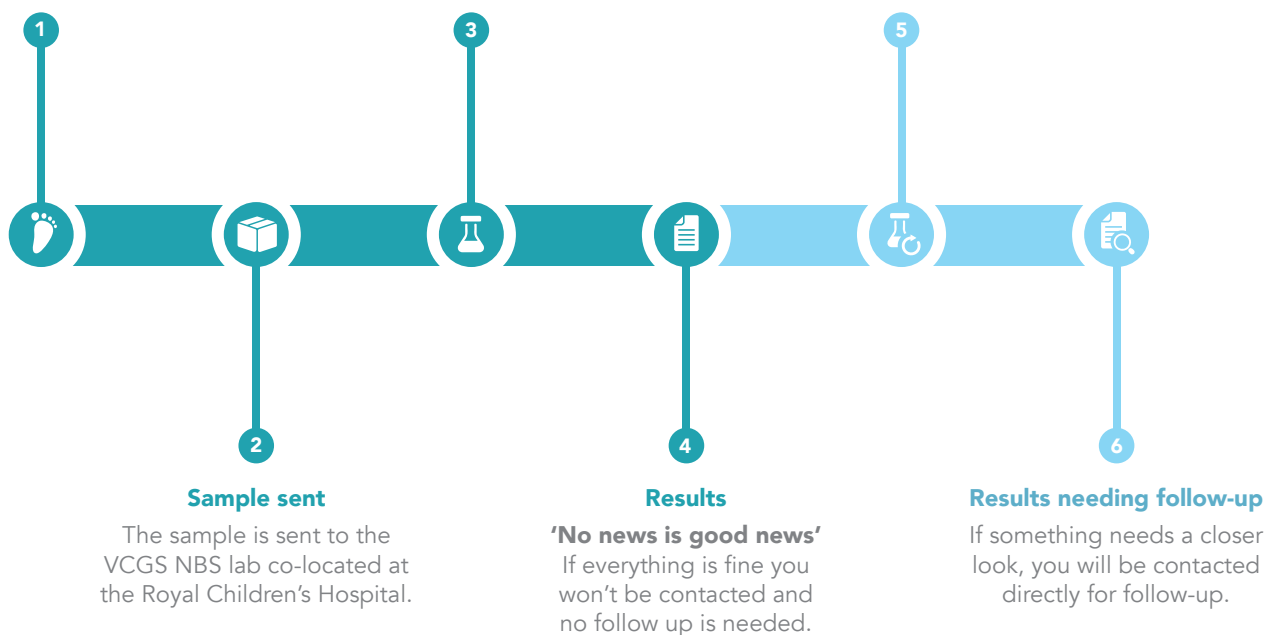
Testing

We test the sample for over 35 rare but serious conditions.

Recollection

Sometimes a repeat sample is needed. You will be contacted directly to arrange this.

This is common and should not be a cause for concern.



The bloodspot screening card looks like this:

SOAK BLOOD FROM THE OTHER SIDE

VICTORIAN NEWBORN SCREENING LABORATORY

BIRTH HOSPITAL _____ CURRENT HOSPITAL _____

COMPLETE ALL DETAILS OR USE HOSPITAL LABEL BELOW

Baby's FULL NAME _____

Mother's FULL NAME _____

Current UR (mother/baby) _____

Mother's phone no _____ Male Female

Date of birth / / time _____:24:00hr

Date of sample / / time _____:24:00hr

Gestation: weeks _____ Birth weight: _____ g Twin 1 2

Transfusion date / / Pre Tx TPN Breast Milk Formula

Relevant History _____

Collector's Name _____

Newborn Screening Consent
I have received and understood the information in the newborn screening brochure. I consent to my baby having blood collected for the newborn screening test. Yes No

Secondary Research Use
I understand that blood from stored screening cards can be used occasionally for de-identified health research. I choose to make my baby's blood sample available for this purpose. Yes No

Parent Signature: _____

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Frequently asked questions

Is the heel prick safe for my baby?

Yes, it is. The heel prick may cause brief discomfort to your newborn but holding or feeding them will help.

Can I choose not to have newborn bloodspot screening (NBS)?

Yes, screening is optional.

What are the risks of not screening?

If your baby has one of the conditions screened, their health could already be affected by the time they show symptoms. Early screening means early detection and early action.

I had prenatal screening. Does my baby still need NBS?

Yes. Prenatal screening and newborn bloodspot screening are different tests. They look for specific conditions that may affect your baby's health.

What happens to the card after testing?

Your baby's screening card must be stored by the laboratory for two years. This is done in case more testing is needed and to make sure the laboratory is meeting quality standards. More information about card storage and use can be found on our website.

I want my baby screened but I don't want the card used for research.

Having the screening card available for research is a personal choice and should not deter you from screening. Simply tick 'no' for the research option on the consent form.

VCGS acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government

