



USEP-OHIO PARENT TIP: Keeping Ohio Babies Safe

This brief Parent Tip is provided at no cost by United Services for Effective Parenting-Ohio, Inc. as a tool to assist parents, teachers, grandparents and all who help to care for and to raise our children. For more information on this and other tools from USEP-OHIO refer to the conclusion of this Parent Tip.

We are expecting our first baby. I heard he should receive testing soon after birth. Why?

Ohio, like most states, has taken steps to keep newborn babies safer by making sure they are screened for conditions that might limit their health and well-being as they grow.

- Newborn screening is a public health program that provides early identification and follow-up for treatment of infants affected by certain genetic, metabolic, hormonal and functional conditions. Except for hearing, screening tests are done using a few drops of blood from the newborn's heel, usually taken in the hospital 24-48 hours after birth. Tests for hearing loss use either a tiny, soft earphone or microphone that is placed in the baby's ear.

What do we do if our baby tests positive?

Parents should not panic if test results come back abnormal. The initial screening tests give only preliminary information that must be followed up by more precise testing.

Who can I ask about the testing?

There are state mandates for testing for many of the conditions and the screening tools, but it is still a good idea to ask your doctor which conditions and reports are used at your clinic or hospital. Some of those Ohio has adopted are in the process of being fully implemented.

If my baby is diagnosed with one of the conditions, what will happen?

Your doctor will help you. Sometimes the treatment is very simple. It is essential for your child's healthy development to follow the recommendations of the medical team involved. The baby may need to be treated at a specialized pediatric center.

Where can I learn more about the testing and the conditions/birth defects it can prevent?

Ask your doctor and medical staff for information. They will be able to help you, and probably can provide a brochure that will give a description of the testing.

The March of Dimes website www.marchofdimes.com provides links and information about the newborn testing and many other topics of interest including:

- Before You're Pregnant
- During Your Pregnancy
- Complications
- Labor and Delivery
- Caring for Your Baby
- Just for Dad
- Folic Acid
- Birth Defects and Genetics
- Questions and Answers

The March of Dimes video, "A Parent's Guide to Newborn Screening" is available in English and Spanish. Go to <http://www.marchofdimes.com/nbs/>. Look at the first section entitled, 'What you need to know' and click on the video link.

Informed parents = safer, healthier babies!

We invite you to share this USEP-OHIO publication with other parents, students and professionals at home or work. You have permission to copy Tips as written, send on as email, or print for a newsletter or handout. Email usepohio@usepohio.com or call 1-800-262-4KIDS to add email addresses to our list, to give us feedback about how the information works for you, or for other topics, publications and programs.

cindymckay49