آغا خان یونیورسٹی ہسپتال
The Aga Khan University Hospital

New Born Screening Program

Information for Parents/Guardians

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COLLEGE of AMERICAN PATHOLOGISTS

What is newborn screening (NBS)?

Newborn Screening identifies babies who are at risk of serious disorders that are treatable, but not apparent at birth. NBS is a standard of care and is strongly recommended for all babies at birth.

Why is NBS important?

- Testing every newborn is important because signs and symptoms of disorders may not be apparent at birth.
- Without NBS, neonates will not be diagnosed early on, which may lead to serious health problems, including mental and physical impairment, and sometimes even life-threatening conditions.
- Most affected babies do not have a family history; therefore, every baby is at risk, and needs to be screened.

How is the NBS performed?

NBS for disorders is performed in various ways. One way is through collecting few drops of blood from baby's heal through a heal prick on a filter paper. A qualified healthcare professional will collect the samples.

For newborn hearing screening, a small device called, otoacoustic emission monitor, is used to screen a baby's hearing capacity.

When is NBS performed?

NBS samples for disorders performed using heal prick are ideally collected between 48 to 72 hours of life.

Is NBS safe?

There is no risk associated with NBS. However, some babies may cry when their heal is pricked, but the discomfort lasts only for a short time and does not require any treatment.

What if my baby's NBS is abnormal?

If your baby's NBS is abnormal for any of the disorders included in the screening, your healthcare provider will be notified of any abnormal results for

in-patient babies. Parents/guardians will be informed about abnormal results for samples collected in out-patient setting.

An abnormal NBS result does not necessarily mean that your baby has a disorder. Your doctor will guide you about the next essential steps to confirm or exclude the disease.

What if my baby's NBS is normal?

Only abnormal results are communicated through phone calls. You are encouraged to inquire about your baby's NBS result when you bring your baby for a regular follow-up.

Please note that a normal NBS result does not always rule out the disorder. In case the baby shows signs and symptoms of a particular disorder, a complete medical evaluation will be required.

When do some babies need to have a repeat NBS?

- If the sample collection was improper or inadequate.
- If NBS sample was collected after the baby has received a blood transfusion.
- If NBS results are discordant (not similar) in twins / triplet births.
- For newborn hearing, a repeat screening may be needed in case vernix or wax is detected.
- If required, as per the decision of your primary physician.

What disorders are included in NBS Program at AKUH?

At present the following disorders are included in the NBS Program at AKUH:

- Congenital Hypothyroidism
- Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia
- Newborn Hearing

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