



INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS: My Baby had a Packed Red Blood Cell Transfusion and Needs a Repeat Newborn Screen

What is Newborn Screening?

These are routine tests done shortly after birth on every baby born in Ontario. A small sample of blood is taken from your baby and is tested for 29 rare treatable diseases.

What is a blood transfusion?

A blood transfusion is when a person gets blood that comes from someone else. Some babies need a blood transfusion if they are sick. There are different kinds of blood transfusions. A packed red blood cell (PRBC) transfusion affects the newborn screening test. Other types of blood transfusions do not affect the newborn screening test. If you are unsure about the type of blood transfusion your baby received, ask your baby's doctor or health care provider.

What does it mean if my baby had a transfusion before their newborn screening test was done?

Testing for most diseases is accurate even if your baby had a transfusion before his or her newborn screening test. However, PRBC transfusions interfere with newborn screening for galactosemia and a group of diseases called hemoglobinopathies. **To accurately screen your baby for these diseases, he or she needs a repeat newborn screen.**

What is galactosemia?

Galactosemia is a rare inherited (genetic) disease that does not allow a baby to break down galactose (a form of sugar found in breast milk and many foods). If untreated, it can lead to serious and permanent health problems like poor growth, liver damage, kidney problems, cataracts, life-threatening infections and mental retardation.

What are hemoglobinopathies?

Hemoglobinopathies are inherited diseases that affect red blood cells. If untreated, they can cause anemia, severe pain, damage to tissue and organs, stroke, or, in severe cases, death.

When should my baby have a repeat newborn screen performed?

Four to six months after your baby's last PRBC transfusion is the best time for the repeat newborn screen. For example, if your baby had transfusions at 1 day of age, 2 weeks of age, and 6 weeks of age the repeat newborn screen should be taken 4-6 months after the 6 week transfusion.

Who should arrange the repeat newborn screen for my baby?

Your baby's primary health care provider or the hospital where you gave birth should organize a repeat newborn screen for your baby.

Where can I get more information?

For more information on newborn screening, please visit the Parents section of the Newborn Screening Ontario website at www.newbornscreening.on.ca or talk to your health care provider.

NOTE TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS: This information is only for parents whose baby has had a PRBC transfusion prior to their newborn screen. This fact sheet is for information purposes only and should not replace professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment.