

Newborn Screening DOs & DON'Ts

DO ...

DO... call it the newborn screen, metabolic panel, heel-stick, or dried blood spot test

DO... use same newborn screening kit (pink hearing card and dried blood spot card) for each child - the barcode numbers should match

DO... accurately complete all the information requested on the card

DO... double check the blood specimen collected on the card matches the demographic information written (especially with multiple births, twins or triplets)

DO... collect the 1st specimen in the recommended timeframe of 18-48 hours of age (must be collected before 48 hours per state law)

DO... collect a 2nd specimen for all infants between 7 and 14 days of age

DO... practice aseptic collection techniques by:

- wearing gloves and using sterile lancets
- avoiding contamination with urine, feces, or other interfering substances
- completely filling each blood circle before moving onto the next, allowing blood to soak through the filter paper

DO... air dry specimens horizontally for 3 hours before closing the flap

DO... send specimens to the State Newborn Screening laboratory as soon as it is dry (initial specimen cards must be received at the State Lab within 72 hours of collection per state law)

DO... call us for high priority specimens that require STAT testing (i.e. clinical symptoms or family history of newborn screening disorder)

DON'T ...

DON'T... wait to send more than one day's set of specimens ("batching" cards can delay testing & ultimately diagnosis & treatment of babies with life-threatening disorders)

DON'T... collect blood less 18 hours after delivery [unless interfering substances will be administered (HA/TPN, antibiotics, steroids, RBC transfusion), or if the baby will not be with a medical provider in the recommended timeframe of 18-48 hours]

DON'T... use EDTA tubes (purple top) to collect blood

DON'T... expose specimens to heat, direct sunlight, humidity, or place in plastic bags

DON'T... contaminate or scratch the filter paper

DON'T... collect blood on both sides of the filter paper

DON'T... check the "twin A" box if baby is a single birth (singleton)

DON'T... mark or place stickers in the "do not use" section of the collection card

DON'T... call it the "PKU test!" (We screen for a number of other disorders in addition to PKU)

DON'T... re-apply blood to the same circle once blood on the card has already dried

