

NEWBORN SCREENING NEWSLETTER



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Why Do We Require a Heelstick?

A heelstick is required to obtain the most accurate results. Many acutely ill newborns have multiple lines in place and it is tempting to utilize these lines to prevent the infant having another stick. Unfortunately, the Newborn Screening test cutoffs are based on heelstick specimens values. Blood collected from other sources can produce inaccurate results resulting in additional testing needed for the newborn or missed abnormal results. Specimens should never be collected from lines in which lipids or proteins are being administered. For these and several other reasons, we strongly discourage collection of the newborn screen by any other method besides the heelstick.



Q: Can a capillary tube be utilized for newborn screening specimen collection?

A: No, capillary tube collection is never acceptable and will result in unsatisfactory specimens and delayed testing for the infant. Capillary tubes can cause an unequal distribution of blood on the collection card and may cause tearing of the filter paper.

How Should The Newborn Screening Specimen Be Shipped?

After the specimen has been dried for three hours on a drying rack the specimen is ready for shipment. The specimen should be protected by closing the biohazard flap over the specimen. The specimen should then be placed in a strong, durable envelope. Facility policy should be followed in sending the specimens to the State Laboratory in a timely manner.



Q: Can a biohazard bag be used to transport newborn screening specimens?

A: No, a biohazard bag should never be used. These bags create an airtight environment in which heat and moisture damage the dried blood spots. There are also chemicals in the biohazard bag plastic which interfere with testing.

Training Opportunities:

We have conducted several successful trainings throughout the State of Utah. Training is provided by Registered Nurses and focuses on correct collection of specimens as well as discussion about the importance of Newborn Screening.

If you would like to schedule a training please contact the Newborn Screening Program at 801-584-8256

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