Congratulations!

Congratulations on the birth of your baby! This guide explains several early screening tests and services that Rhode Island offers for newborns. Before leaving the hospital, your baby will have these screening tests to detect serious conditions that may affect his or her health and development. All conditions identified through these screenings can be treated if found early. You do not have to pay for any of these screenings.

Health Information Line

If you need more information about any of the newborn screening services or programs described in this guide, call the Health Information Line at 401-222-5960 / RI Relay 711, weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Our team speaks English and Spanish.

KIDSNET

KIDSNET is Rhode Island’s information system that helps make sure that children receive complete preventive healthcare. All babies born in Rhode Island have health information included in KIDSNET. As your baby grows, your doctor and other authorized professionals may add your child’s immunizations, height and weight measurements, nutritional status, medical conditions, and results of developmental, hearing, lead, and newborn blood screenings. Information from your baby’s birth certificate and from Family Visiting, Early Intervention, Head Start, Early Head Start, Cribs, Asthma, Child Outreach, and WIC Programs is also included. If your child has been to different doctors, KIDSNET will keep track of preventive health services in one place.

KIDSNET information is confidential and is protected under state and federal privacy laws. Only the Rhode Island Department of Health, doctors, nurses, and other authorized professionals can see KIDSNET information.

You have the right to see your child’s information and to ask that incorrect or incomplete information be changed. You also have the right to restrict who can see your child’s information. For details, call the Health Information Line at 401-222-5960 / RI Relay 711, weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Newborn Blood Screening

Before your baby goes home from the hospital, a drop of blood will be taken from your baby’s heel. The blood will be screened for metabolic (how the body digests foods), endocrine (how the body controls many functions), and hemoglobin (blood) conditions (refer to list for more details about these conditions). Newborn blood screening is required by law. Blood samples are stored until your baby reaches adulthood. To refuse, you must sign a waiver stating that you understand the risk of not having the screening test done.

The newborn blood screening should be done when your baby is at least 24 hours old. If your baby leaves the hospital before this time, you will have to bring your baby back for the screening. Sometimes, a screening may need to be repeated. This does not necessarily mean that your baby has a condition. If your baby’s screening needs to be repeated, a doctor or nurse will call you. The screening needs to be repeated as soon as possible. It is how it is done at the hospital where your baby was born, but you can go to the lab at any maternity hospital in Rhode Island.

Results from these screenings are reported to your baby’s doctor. Screening is available for many conditions beyond those included in Rhode Island’s Newborn Blood Screening Program. These additional screenings are available for a fee through other labs. If you would like to have your baby receive additional screening, you should call the lab where your baby was born, but you can go to the lab at any maternity hospital in Rhode Island.

The screening needs to be repeated as soon as possible. It is best to do this at the hospital where your baby was born, but you can go to the lab at any maternity hospital in Rhode Island.

Newborn Hearing Screening

During your hospital stay, your baby’s hearing will be screened to measure how the body digests food), endocrine (how the body controls many functions), and hemoglobin (blood) conditions (refer to list for more details about these conditions). Early detection and treatment can prevent many serious effects of these conditions.

During your hospital stay, your baby’s hearing will be screened to measure how the hearing system is working. Early detection and treatment can prevent many serious effects of these conditions.

Rhode Island currently screens babies for 35 health conditions, including hearing loss and critical congenital heart disease. The conditions are grouped in the categories explained below. Early detection and treatment can prevent many serious effects of these conditions.

OTHER CONDITIONS: Babies with hypothyroid deficiency can have problems with growth and development. This condition is treated with special medication. Babies with galactosemia cannot use the sugars in milk, formula, and breast milk. It is not treated, it can hurt the baby’s liver, eye, and brain. This condition is treated in special with formula and diet. Babies with severe combined immunodeficiency are more at risk to develop infections. This condition is treated with bone marrow transplant or other interventions.

Certain other conditions may be detected through newborn screening. As testing methods improve, new conditions may be added to the list. The most current list is at https://health.ri.gov/newbornscreening/conditions. For more information about newborn screening and specific conditions visit www.marchofdimes.org/baby/newborn-screening-conditions.