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.

RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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Newborn Screening and Services

A guide to tests, screenings, and programs for newborns.

Newborn Blood Screening

Before your baby goes home from the hospital, a few drops of blood will be taken from your baby's heel. The blood will be screened for metabolic (how the body digests food), endocrine (how the body controls many functions), and hemoglobin (blood) conditions (refer to insert 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 and tell you. 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.

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 Screening Program. These additional screenings are available for a fee through other labs. If you would like to have your baby receive additional screening tests, talk to a doctor or nurse while you are in the hospital about the tests and where you can get them done.

Newborn Hearing Screening

During your hospital stay, your baby's hearing will be screened to measure how the ear responds to soft sounds. A small microphone will be put in your baby's ear. The screening takes 10 to 15 minutes and does not hurt. If the results are not clear, the screening may need to be repeated. If this is needed, the Rhode Island Hearing Assessment Program will contact you. Bring your baby back to the hospital for the repeat screening as soon as possible.

If the screening shows that your baby might have hearing loss, or your baby has any other risk factors for hearing loss, the Rhode Island Hearing Assessment Program will recommend that you take your baby to a hearing specialist (audiologist) for more testing, either right away or at six months of age. The program will contact you to make this appointment.

Birth Defects Program

Babies identified with birth defects in the newborn period are included in a Birth Defects Information System at the Rhode Island Department of Health. The Birth Defects Program uses information in this system to make sure that families and their children receive appropriate services and referrals. This information is also used to study patterns of birth defects. All information in the system is confidential and is protected under state and federal privacy laws.

If you do not want your child's information entered into the Birth Defects Information System, you may either contact your child's doctor directly or call the HEALTH Information Line at **401-222-5960 / RI Relay 711**, weekdays from 8:30 a.m to 4:30 p.m. You also have the right to restrict the release of information on your child from the Birth Defects Information System and to choose to not be contacted by the Birth Defects Program.

First Connections Program

While you and your baby are in the hospital, a nurse will review your pregnancy and delivery records. The nurse will look to see if there are any reasons your baby's development could be delayed.

Based on the review of your records, the nurse may refer you to the First Connections Program, a home visiting program for families with newborns and young children. At no cost to the family, the program offers information on topics such as breastfeeding and nutrition, when to call your baby's doctor, and how to make your home safe for your baby. Home visitors provide support and link you to resources in your community that help you and your baby get off to a healthy start.

While you are in the hospital, a nurse from the First Connections Program may stop in to tell you more about it. If a nurse doesn't see you while you are in the hospital, the program may call you to schedule a home visit. If you are not offered a home visit but would like one, call the HEALTH Information Line at **401-222-5960 / RI Relay 711**, weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

KIDSNET

All babies born in Rhode Island are enrolled in KIDSNET, Rhode Island's information system that helps families and doctors make sure that children receive complete preventive healthcare.

KIDSNET contains information from your child's birth certificate and information such as your name, address, and your child's doctor. As your baby grows, your doctor and others will add your child's immunizations, height and weight measurements, nutritional status, medical conditions, and results of the following health screenings: developmental assessment, hearing assessment, newborn blood screening, and lead screening. Information from the First Connections, Early Intervention, and WIC Programs is also in KIDSNET.

KIDSNET is used is to remind families and doctors when immunizations, lead screenings, and other services are needed. If your child has been to different doctors, KIDSNET will keep track of all of his or her immunizations in one place. KIDSNET also helps to see whether all Rhode Island children are getting the care they need.

KIDSNET information is confidential and is protected under state and federal privacy laws. Only the Rhode Island Department of Health, doctors, nurses, and other approved professionals such as school nurses or the Head Start Program can see KIDSNET information. You have the right to see your child's information. If you feel the information is incorrect or incomplete, you have the right to ask that it be changed. You also have the right to restrict who can see your child's information. For details about how to do this, call the HEALTH Information Line at **401-222-5960 / RI Relay 711**, weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.