Birth Care & Family Health Services

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Newborn Hearing Screening

Serious hearing loss is the most common birth defect in the United States, affecting 3 or more of every 1,000 newborns. Hearing deficit that is not detected and treated may result in lifelong problems. Even partial hearing loss may result in delay in learning to talk, learning disabilities or social and emotional problems. Early intervention is critical to helping babies with hearing problems lead normal lives.

More than half of babies with a hearing deficit have no other health problems and no family history of deafness. Hearing loss, especially when only partial, may be difficult for parents and even caregivers to detect. However, using special screening equipment, hearing deficit in newborns can be safely and quickly detected as early as 24 hour of age.

Hearing screens will be done at the 2-week postpartum visit for the minimal cost of $25. If you have insurance or Medicaid, this screening test may not be covered by your plan. You may choose to have your infant screened by an audiologist.

Metabolic Screening

One in 1,500 newborn babies is affected by an inherited disorder that can be detected through newborn screening. Metabolic disorders such as PKU disease and maple syrup urine disease can hinder an infant's normal physical and mental development in a variety of ways. And parents can pass along the gene for a certain disorder without even knowing that they're carriers.

Screening, diagnosis and intervention within the first days of life are essential because many of these disorders are manageable if treatment begins early. A healthcare professional draws a small sample of blood by pricking the baby's heel and places the blood on absorbent filter paper. This simple blood test can diagnose more than 30 metabolic disorders. These conditions are rare and most babies are given a clean bill of health. However, for affected babies, early diagnosis and proper treatment can make the difference between lifelong impairment and healthy development.

Metabolic Screening will be done following birth at the 2 day check and costs $26.

Pulse Oximetry Screening

We screen all newborn babies at birth using a Pulse Oximeter. This allows us to measure the oxygen level circulating through your baby’s blood in his hand and his foot. It is done using a light that shines through his skin. If we find a difference in levels between the hand and the foot, it can be an early indication of heart problems. Early identification of these problems can save a baby’s life by allowing us to get help before the baby gets sick.