

What if the CCHD screening results are abnormal?

Babies with low oxygen levels may have a CCHD. Other conditions like breathing problems or infections may also cause a low blood oxygen level. If your baby has a low oxygen reading, the health care provider will check your baby carefully. They may do an ultrasound of the heart, called an echocardiogram or “echo”, to look for a CCHD. The echocardiogram may be done in a hospital or a doctor’s office. It will need to be reviewed by a children’s heart doctor, called a pediatric cardiologist. If the echocardiogram shows a problem, the medical team will discuss the next steps with you.

What if the CCHD screening results are normal?

Most babies who pass the CCHD screening will not have a CCHD. However, it is important to know that screening cannot identify every baby with a heart problem. If you have concerns about your baby’s health, talk to your baby’s health care provider.



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[Health.Mo.Gov/cchd](https://health.mo.gov/cchd)

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NEWBORN SCREENING

CRITICAL CONGENITAL HEART DEFECTS



What is newborn screening?

Newborn screening refers to screenings performed on babies shortly after birth to protect them from the dangerous effects of disorders that otherwise may not be found for several days, months, or even years. Missouri law requires all babies born in the state to be screened for over 70 different disorders. Most of these disorders are screened by collecting a small amount of blood from the newborn's heel and sending the sample to the Missouri State Public Health Laboratory for testing. Babies are also screened for hearing loss and critical congenital heart defects (CCHD).

What is CCHD?

Critical congenital heart defects (CCHD) are when a baby's heart or major blood vessels do not form correctly, causing a defect. There are many different types of heart defects that range from mild to severe. Babies with "critical" heart defects need urgent treatment, which may include medicine or surgery. Without treatment, these defects can lead to death or can cause serious health issues.



Why is CCHD screening important?

About 2 out of 1,000 babies are born with a CCHD. Without screening shortly after birth, babies with a CCHD might be sent home from the hospital or birthing center without proper care because they look healthy. Sometimes even babies who appear to have a normal prenatal ultrasound can have a hidden CCHD. At home, these babies can develop serious health problems and often need emergency care. CCHD screening may save a baby's life by helping to find a serious heart defect so they can be treated and lead healthier lives.

How is CCHD screening performed?

CCHD screening is a simple test done to determine the amount of oxygen in the baby's blood. Low oxygen levels can be a sign of CCHD. The test is done by a health care provider using a device called a pulse oximeter. The pulse oximeter uses an infrared light sensor gently wrapped around the baby's right hand and one foot. Light passes through the skin and tissue and the sensor estimates the blood oxygen level. The test is painless and takes just a few minutes.

800-TEL-LINK
(800-835-5465)

TEL-LINK provides confidential information and referrals on maternal and child health services.

Health.Mo.Gov/tellink



Pulse oximeter on a newborn's foot.

When is CCHD screening performed?

CCHD screening should be performed 24 to 48 hours after birth or before going home from the hospital. If your baby is born at home or in a birthing center talk to your midwife or baby's doctor about having your baby screened for CCHD. Screening should be done while your baby is warm, calm, and awake. If your baby is crying, moving, fussing, or cold the screening may take longer.