

The Vermont Newborn Screening Program is still providing services during the COVID-19 pandemic. Vermont screens for [35 different conditions](#) that could result in serious health problems, developmental delays, or in rare instances, death if not identified and treated early. The American Academy of Pediatrics [recommends](#) that pediatricians continue to follow state and federal newborn screening guidelines.

Should a newborn screening dried blood spot specimen still be collected from every baby?

- Yes. A newborn screening dried blood spot specimen should be collected from every newborn at 24-48 hours of life unless the parent or guardian declines. If the parent or guardian declines, they must sign a [refusal form](#).

What if the baby will be discharged before 24 hours of life?

- Newborn screening tests should be done before discharge.
- If the baby's dried blood spot specimen is collected before 24 hours of age, it will need to be repeated once they are 24-48 hours old
- Please document contact information for the baby's primary care provider and parent or guardian on the filter paper.

What if the screen is abnormal or unsatisfactory?

- The Vermont Newborn Screening Program will continue to contact hospitals and primary care providers regarding abnormal or unsatisfactory screens. Program staff will work with the provider caring for the baby to determine next steps.
- It is very important to collect high-quality specimens. The baby will need to have another specimen collected if the specimen is unsatisfactory. Please review proper specimen collection technique with your staff and double-check the expiration date of filter papers.
- The provider may wish to make a referral to their local home health agency for repeat screening. Home health nurses may be able to make a home visit to collect a repeat specimen depending on the service area. Find your local agency [here](#).

Can we still collect a newborn screen on a baby who is COVID-19 positive or being evaluated for COVID-19?

- Yes. Babies who are COVID-19 positive or are being evaluated for COVID-19 should still receive recommended care, such as newborn screening. Staff who are collecting specimens should adhere to [guidelines](#) from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the [Vermont Department of Health](#) regarding personal protective equipment and infection control.
- Report all suspect cases of COVID-19 to Vermont Department of Health's Infectious Disease Epidemiology Program by calling 802-863-7240.

Do newborn screening specimens from COVID-19 positive babies or babies born to COVID-19 positive parents need special shipping or handling?

- No. The type of specimen collected for newborn screening does not need special labeling, handling, or shipping if the baby or parent is diagnosed with COVID-19. These dried blood spot specimens can be sent following the [same procedures](#) used for all newborn screening dried bloodspot specimens. The newborn screening laboratory uses precautions for all specimens they receive and test.

More questions?

- Please contact the Vermont Newborn Screening Program at 802-951-5180 or the New England Newborn Screening Program at 774-455-4600.