

TRANSIT TIME OF NEWBORN SCREENING SPECIMENS

NOTICE FROM THE TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF STATE HEALTH SERVICES NEWBORN SCREENING LABORATORY

Ship dried Newborn Screening specimens **within 24 hours of collection or as quickly as possible**. All Newborn Screening specimens should be received in the laboratory no later than **3 days after collection**. Quick delivery of specimens is imperative as some disorders may cause life-threatening symptoms within the first week of life.

Below is a model workflow that may assist facilities to improve the transit time for specimens from their facility and to meet the ideal timeframe.

Model Birthing Facility Workflow to Minimize Transit Time of Newborn Screening Specimens:

1. Newborn Screening specimens are collected before 7am.
2. Specimens are dried for 3-4 hours.
3. The facility Newborn Screening Coordinator (or the assigned backup staff person):
 - a. Gathers specimens from all areas by about 11:30am.
 - b. Checks specimen quality and accuracy / legibility of demographic information.
 - c. Follows up with the nursery or other areas regarding any specimens that have pending orders for which they have no newborn screening specimen in hand.
 - d. Accounts for all newborn screening orders.
4. All specimens are logged for documentation of shipment. (*An overnight courier (FedEx, UPS, etc.) is recommended for shipping specimens*).
5. When final test results are received, the specimen log is used to verify receipt of results for each specimen (College of American Pathologists (CAP) Laboratory Accreditation Program requirement).

Reminders to Decrease Transit Time of Newborn Screening Specimens:

- **DO NOT** delay shipment of newborn screening specimens. Ship dried specimens within 24 hours, preferably via overnight courier. If mail or courier services are unavailable, ship as quickly as possible.
- **DO NOT** batch or hold dried specimens for shipping.
- Ship dried specimens directly from the collection facility to the Newborn Screening Laboratory (Delays are created by first sending specimen to “main” facility then to the Newborn Screening Laboratory).
- Review your facility’s transit times and other newborn screening performance measures on the monthly Newborn Screening Report Card. <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/lab/nbsHCRes.shtm>
- Identify possible process improvements at your facility to minimize transit time.
- Contact the Newborn Screening Laboratory for assistance if needed. See contact information below.

[Please click here to view a recent notice regarding The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel article about delays in newborn screening testing due to delayed specimen delivery to newborn screening laboratories](#)

Questions / Comments / Sign up for Email Notices

Call toll free: 1-888-963-7111 ext. 7585 or for local calls 512-776-7585

Email: NewbornScreeningLab@dshs.state.tx.us