Newborn Screening Quality Improvement Hints

To help improve performance of the screen

COLLECT THE FIRST NEWBORN SCREEN WITHIN THE
24 TO 48 HOUR TIME RANGE

TIPS TO ENSURE ACCURATE TEST RESULTS

- Always record as much information as possible correctly on the demographic form.
- If available, record all time of birth and time of collection in Military Time*.
  *Conversion chart included for reference.
- Record all dates in MM/DD/YY format (month, day, year) to ensure proper classification of specimens into first and second screens.
- The first newborn screen should be collected between 24 - 48 hours of age, or before hospital discharge.
Why is it important to collect the first Newborn Screen after 24 hours of life?

The Texas Department of State Health Services Newborn Screening Laboratory’s recommendation for collection of the first newborn screening specimen is within 24 to 48 hours of birth. For the accurate interpretation of test results, timing of blood spot collection is very important. DSHS testing algorithms are determined down to the minute. Specimens collected outside of the 24 to 48 hour window may have different cut off values than those collected within the ideal time frame.

There are circumstances for collection before the 24 hours, like before transfusion. For guidelines on specimen collection in special circumstances please visit https://www.dshs.texas.gov/lab/nbsSpecialC.shtm.

Other Helpful Resources

- General newborn screening specimen collection questions: dshs.texas.gov/lab/nbs_collect_reqs.shtm
- Newborn screening collection video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vxshWngJ114
- Healthcare provider resources: dshs.texas.gov/lab/nbsHCRes.shtm
- DSHS Newborn Screening Laboratory Contact: Email: NewbornScreeningLab@dshs.state.tx.us or call 1-888-963-7111 ext. 7333
- Monthly newborn screening facility report cards: Sign up for Texas Newborn Screening Web Application (Neometrics) to access your facility’s report card. Find the sign-up forms here: dshs.texas.gov/lab/nbsRDSforms.shtm