



## **Newborn Screens in Ontario**

### **1. Dried Blood Spot**

This blood test is taken after the baby is 24 hours old using a heel prick. The screen for newborn blood spot samples for 6 groups of diseases:

- Metabolic diseases - where the body is unable to break down certain substances in foods, like fats, proteins, or sugars.
- Endocrine diseases - where the body produces too much or too little of certain hormones.
- Sickle cell disease - which affects the movement of oxygen in the blood.
- Cystic fibrosis - which causes problems with breathing and growth.
- Severe combined immune deficiency - which affects the body's ability to fight infections.
- Spinal muscular atrophy - which causes muscle weakness and wasting.

### **2. Critical congenital heart disease (CCHD)**

This is a quick and painless test called pulse oximetry that measures the level of oxygen in a baby's blood. This test is done at the bedside and results are available right away.

### **3. The Hearing Test**

Hearing screening finds babies who are at high risk for hearing loss and should have more in-depth testing. Children with hearing loss may hear some sounds but miss others, making it harder to learn speech and language. This can lead to behavioral and learning problems. This screen is done prior to discharge or may be booked as an outpatient in the couple months following birth.

### **4. Biliary Atresia**

Parents are the primary screeners for biliary atresia. An infant stool colour card is used to identify pale stools and parents are given the ISCC at the hospital. Parents will compare their child's stool colour to the images on the ISCC during regular diaper changes for the first month of life. If they detect pale stool, they can contact NSO. In biliary atresia, bile cannot get from the liver to the stool, causing pale colour stool. This blockage causes buildup of bile in the liver, which can damage it. Surgery is the treatment.