

Newborn Metabolic Screening

These are critical conditions - every day counts



November 2021

Couriers are currently experiencing significant delays.

Below are best practice guidelines to support samples reaching the lab as soon as possible.

Samples & Results



- ⑥ The optimal time for sample collection is between **48 to 72 hours of age**. However, samples that are collected from babies from 24 hours of age **are accepted by the lab for processing**
- ⑥ Whilst couriers have delays, we are recommending, where possible, that **blood samples are collected whilst babies are still in the hospital or birthing centre**. For these babies, blood samples **can be collected from 24 hours after birth**.
- ⑥ Use of the facility's courier system will enable the sample gets to the lab as soon as possible.
- ⑥ Send each sample test as it is collected and dried – **don't hold onto samples** to send them in batches.
- ⑥ You should receive a result in 7-10 days of the sample being taken and if not, **check that the lab has the sample** using the courier tracking number and call 0800 LABLINK to enquire about the sample/result.
- ⑥ Remember to let the parents/guardian know the results.

Courier

- ⑥ Couriers are experiencing significant delays. The quicker you get samples to the courier, the sooner they get to the lab.
- ⑥ The **courier tracking number should be recorded** before blood spot sample test cards are sent to the lab. Take one of the number labels from the courier pack and add this to the baby's health care records.
- ⑥ The Courier Post bags have changed colour to blue and priority delivery stickers are available to be placed on them.

Changes

- ⑥ Results are no longer being sent by fax, so please contact the lab ASAP to update your preferred contact details. Fill out the [form on medialab.com](https://www.medialab.com) and email to LabLink@adhb.govt.nz
- ⑥ There has been a **change of card colour from buff to white**. Keep using old buff cards until the old stock is used up.
- ⑥ **For the new cards, new information is required** regarding the location where the sample was taken (community, birthing unit, home or hospital).



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National Screening Unit

November 2021

Case Study: Congenital adrenal hyperplasia

Every day counts to making a difference for the baby/pēpi in newborn screening. This is one example of why delays can have serious consequences.

Congenital adrenal hyperplasia (CAH) is just one of the serious illnesses that can be detected by newborn screens. Days and hours matter, and our experience is that babies with CAH who are detected through newborn screening in the first week of life have minimal symptoms - they might be starting to spill and have mild electrolyte disturbance but are otherwise well babies. The same disease picked up at 2-3 weeks old looks completely different, with babies that are extremely unwell. They can be dehydrated, well below their birth-weight, with little urine output and unmeasurable BP. The electrolyte disturbance (low sodium, high potassium) can be very severe and immediately life-threatening. Some babies with CAH that is picked up late will be so sick they need admission to ICU, and might be left with life-long disability. Remember, **every day counts in newborn screening.**



Things to Remember

- When whānau/parents/guardians **decline**, where appropriate, please ask them if they agree to a blood spot card being filled out with their demographic information, to monitor participation in the programme. With their approval, fill the sample card in as much as possible including a note that screening was declined, and courier it to the laboratory.
- Review and refresh your practice:** Two Newborn Metabolic Screening e-learning modules are available at [Learn Online](#).
 - Best Practice - Newborn Metabolic Blood Spot Collection
 - Newborn Metabolic Screening Programme

We encourage all midwives to complete these modules, which are recognised by the Midwifery Council for continuing midwifery education hours.

- The Guidelines for practitioners** providing services within the Newborn Metabolic Screening Programme in New Zealand are [available on the NSU website](#).
- Resources:** lancets, cards and courier bags can be ordered via newbornscreeningresources@adhb.govt.nz

