

# Information for Families



## *Congratulations on the birth of your baby!*

Becoming a new parent is a wonderful and challenging time filled with joys and uncertainties.

After your baby is born, your health care provider will do some exams and tests. One of the newest tests is for serious heart problems that your baby may have at birth. Health care providers call these problems "Critical Congenital Heart Defects (CCHDs)."

The screening test for serious heart problems is called **pulse oximetry**. This test:

- ♥ Measures the amount of oxygen in your baby's blood.
- ♥ Is easy and painless.
- ♥ Is best done when your baby is between 24 to 48 hours old. (If your child is on oxygen in the first days after birth, the pulse oximetry testing may be done at another time.)



To do this test, your nurse will put a small sticker, called a probe, on your baby's right hand and on your baby's foot. The probe measures the amount of oxygen in your baby's blood.



Most babies will pass this screening test the first time and will not need any more tests. A small number of babies will need to redo the pulse oximetry screening. Babies with lower than normal oxygen levels on more pulse oximetry screenings

will usually need to have another test called an echocardiogram to determine if they have a serious heart problem.

An echocardiogram is an ultrasound test of your baby's heart. An echocardiogram is painless and is like the ultrasound some mothers have when they are pregnant. Many hospitals can do an echocardiogram for babies, but some babies may need to go to a different health care office to have an echocardiogram.



For more information go to:  
[www.ncdhhs.gov/dph/wch/families/newbornmetabolic.htm](http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dph/wch/families/newbornmetabolic.htm)



State of North Carolina | Pat McCrory, Governor  
Department of Health and Human Services | Aldona Z. Wos, M.D., Secretary  
Division of Public Health  
[www.ncdhhs.gov](http://www.ncdhhs.gov) | [www.publichealth.nc.gov](http://www.publichealth.nc.gov)  
N.C. DHHS is an equal opportunity employer and provider. 2/15

**Used with permission from the Wisconsin SHINE Project**