

## Newborn Pulse Oximetry Testing

A pulse oximetry (pulse ox) test is used to check the oxygen level in your newborn baby's blood.

For this test, a small sensor (light source) inside a soft bandage is wrapped around your baby's right hand and foot. Light waves in the sensor measure the oxygen level in the baby's blood.

*If you have  
any questions,  
please ask your  
physician or  
nurse.*

### Why the test is done

Pulse oximetry is a screening test that can help identify serious problems with your baby's heart. These defects are called critical congenital heart defects (CCHD). Finding these problems early will help your physician treat your baby right away if needed.

### When the test is done

Your baby will have a pulse ox test 24 hours after birth. Your nurse or patient care technician will do the test when your baby is resting quietly. This test usually takes only a few minutes, and it does not cause any pain or discomfort.

### After the test

Your nurse will tell you the results after the test. If your baby does not pass the pulse ox test, your nurse will contact your baby's physician. The physician will explain what other testing is needed. It is important to know that many babies are found not to have a CCHD after additional testing.

Pulse oximetry helps find most, but not all, heart defects. All babies should have regular checkups with their physician. Your physician will talk with you if there is any concern your baby has a heart problem.

For more information about CCHD, visit: [cdc.gov/ncbddd/heartdefects/screening.html](https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/heartdefects/screening.html).