

Newborn Pulse Oximetry Testing

A pulse oximetry (pulse ox) test checks the oxygen level in your newborn baby's blood.

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

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

During the test

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. They will wrap a soft bandage with a small sensor (light source) in it around your baby's right hand and foot. Light waves in the sensor measure the oxygen level in your baby's blood.

This test usually takes only a few minutes. 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 more testing.

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

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