

Newborn Procedures, Medications, and Screening Tests

At birth

During the birth of your baby, your nurse will call in an additional nurse to be present to help with the baby. This nurse is present to help initiate resuscitation measures if needed.

Occasionally a neonatal nurse practitioner or neonatologist is asked to attend in the event your baby is born early (before 37 weeks) or has meconium in the fluid, for example. Your midwife will discuss this with you in labor if needed.

As long as your labor and birth remains low-risk, our routine is to place your baby immediately skin-to-skin with you and to initiate optimal cord clamping (greater than three minutes or until the cord stops pulsing). It is ideal for you to remain skin-to-skin with your baby and breastfeed within the first hour. All newborn procedures will be delayed until after this “Golden Hour” while you and your baby get to know one another.

Within 2 hours

A nurse will check vital signs on your baby more frequently within the first hour of life to monitor how your baby’s transition to the outside world. Within 2 hours of birth, your nurse will do a full examination and take a weight and measurements. If your baby has risk factors for low blood sugar (diabetic mother, pre-term, large or small for their gestation, or stressful labor and birth, for example), she may also check a blood sugar level. Some infant’s may require 12-24 hours of blood sugar monitoring if he/she has the above-mentioned risk factors.

Medications

Erythromycin – This is a topical ointment that is placed on your baby’s eyes to prevent ophthalmia neonatorum (a type of pink eye). Ophthalmia Neonatorum can lead to eye damage or blindness and is caused by gonorrhea. For more information, go to:

<https://evidencebasedbirth.com/is-erythromycin-eye-ointment-always-necessary-for-newborns/>

Vitamin K injection – Vitamin K is a necessary vitamin to help with blood clotting. Humans do not store it very well within their bodies and infants are not born with Vitamin K in their systems. Because of this, an injection of Vitamin K is recommended within two hours of your baby’s birth to help prevent Vitamin K deficiency bleeding. It is also recommended if you choose to have a circumcision for your son (**Note: a circumcision will not be performed if you choose to decline Vitamin K for your baby boy.**) For more information go to

<http://evidencebasedbirth.com/evidence-for-the-vitamin-k-shot-in-newborns/>

Hepatitis B vaccine – The CDC and most pediatricians recommend that every baby receive the Hepatitis B vaccine at birth. This vaccine helps protect against Hepatitis B, which is a liver disease that is spread through blood or other bodily fluids. For more information speak with your pediatrician or go to <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/hepb/fs-parents.html>

After 24 hours

At 24 hours of life there are a few tests recommended for your infant. Usually these are performed in the nursery. You are welcome to accompany your baby for these tests.

Weight – Your baby is weighed again to check on weight loss. All babies lose weight after they are born, but a weight loss of more than 8-10% may require further evaluation. Your baby will most likely be back to birth weight within 2 weeks.

Newborn Metabolic Disease screening – This test is done at 24 hours of age: several drops of blood are taken from your baby's heel and sent to the state lab to screen for major health disorders. Results are sent to your pediatrician. The earlier the diagnosis, the quicker treatment can be started to prevent possible disabilities. For more information on what diseases this test screens for visit: http://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/0,5885,7-339-73971_4911_4916-233939--,00.html

Jaundice screening – Jaundice, the yellowing of a baby's skin, is caused by an increase in bilirubin, which is a byproduct of red blood cells breaking down. This is screened in newborns by using a non-invasive light on your baby's chest. If the result comes back high, a sample of blood will be drawn from your baby's foot while doing the newborn screening test. If the blood test comes back high phototherapy may be recommended for your baby.

Hearing exam – Your baby's hearing will be checked using an Auditory Brainstem Response (ABR) test using sticker-like electrodes. This test evaluates your baby's brain in response to sound.

Screening for Critical Congenital Heart Defects – Small Band-Aid-like devices are placed on your baby's arm and foot to test how well your baby is oxygenated. This test can evaluate possible heart defects, which may require further evaluation.

Circumcision – A circumcision is an optional procedure that is not medically indicated, but is often requested by parents for cosmetic or religious reasons. **We require that your baby receive a Vitamin K injection prior to a circumcision to help decrease risk of bleeding and/or hemorrhage.** Dr. LaGrand performs all of the circumcisions at the Advanced Ob-Gyn office between 1-6 weeks of age. He will explain risks/benefits of the procedure, the method he uses, and how to care for the circumcision afterward. If you have any questions about circumcision, please don't hesitate to ask us at your next prenatal visit. For more information regarding newborn circumcision go to: <https://evidencebasedbirth.com/evidence-and-ethics-on-circumcision/>