

The University of Chicago Cystic Fibrosis Care Center



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My Baby has a positive newborn screening result

Before you took your newborn baby home from the hospital, a small amount of blood was taken from his or her foot for Illinois State's Newborn Screening Program, of which a condition called Cystic Fibrosis (CF) was tested for. One of your baby's test results showed a need for a second test called a sweat test.

Why does my baby need a sweat test?

The sweat test will measure how much salt is in your baby's sweat. This test is the best way of checking for CF. *Most babies who get a sweat test do not have CF.* Babies with CF have salty sweat. CF causes breathing and digestive problems and people with CF need special medical care. When CF is diagnosed the baby can start to be treated with therapies and medicine (if needed).

Is there any preparation for the sweat test?

There are no restrictions on activity or diet or special preparation before the test. However, do not use any lotions or creams on your baby's arms or legs on the day of the test (including moisturizing soaps). Bring an extra blanket or sweater and hat to keep the baby warm during the test.

What happens during a sweat test?

The sweat test takes about one hour from start to finish. A special machine causes a small part of the baby's arm or leg to sweat. The skin may feel warm and tingly for 5 minutes while the machine is on. Your baby may cry during this part of the test, but it is not painful. The sweat is collected on a gauze pad or disc. After 30 minutes time, the gauze or disc is removed and the sweat is tested in the lab.

What do the results mean?

Results should be available the same day as the sweat test. There are four possible results:

Negative result: This means that a normal amount of salt was found in the sweat. It is very rare for a person to have CF if the sweat test result is negative. Your baby should get regular baby care.

Positive result: A positive sweat test means that your baby probably has CF. Your baby should meet with individuals at the CF Care Center and have a check-up with a doctor who specializes in treating people with CF.

Borderline result: Sometimes the sweat test result will be in-between positive and negative. You will be asked to bring the baby back for another sweat test, and perhaps an exam and blood test.

"QNS": means Quantity Not Sufficient (there was not enough sweat on the gauze or disc). You will be asked to bring the baby back another day to try again.

My baby was found to be a CF carrier through newborn screening. What does that mean?

CF carriers are healthy and their sweat test results are usually normal. If both parents are CF carriers, they could have a child with CF in the future. If your baby is a CF carrier, *then you or your partner is a CF carrier, too.* It is also possible that both you and your partner are CF carriers, and you could have a child with CF in the future. A brochure, *My Baby is a CF Carrier: What Does that Mean?* is also available. If you aren't sure if your baby is a CF carrier, ask your baby's health care provider.

I had a negative CF blood test when I was pregnant. Does my baby still need a sweat test?

Yes. Any baby whose newborn screening result is positive should have a sweat test.