

## What is a fatty acid oxidation disorder?

A baby with a fatty acid oxidation disorder has trouble using fat for energy. This is because a special enzyme that converts fat to energy is either missing or not working correctly. There are several different types of fatty acid oxidation disorders. A baby with a fatty acid oxidation disorder cannot go without eating for very long. If this happens, a medical crisis could occur.

## What causes a fatty acid oxidation disorder?

A child inherits a fatty acid oxidation disorder from both parents. It cannot be “caught” like a cold and cannot be “given” to another child.

## How is the condition found?

Shortly after birth, several drops of blood are taken from a baby’s heel. The dried blood sample is sent to the State Department of Health and Senior Services’ Inborn Errors of Metabolism Laboratory, where it is tested for fatty acid oxidation disorders and several other conditions. These tests are all part of the state’s Newborn Screening Program.

## What does the lab look for?

The lab tests the baby’s blood for abnormal substances.

## Does an abnormal screening test mean that my baby has a fatty acid oxidation disorder?

Screening tests always need to be confirmed by additional testing and medical evaluation.

IF YOU ARE ASKED TO HAVE YOUR  
BABY RE-TESTED, ACT QUICKLY AND  
FOLLOW YOUR DOCTOR’S ADVICE

## What will my baby’s doctor do?

The doctor may refer you and your baby to a metabolic/genetic specialist. The doctor and specialist will determine the diagnosis by doing one or more of the following:

- Get a complete medical history and do a physical exam;
- Look for symptoms;
- Get another blood sample to confirm or rule out the screening

## How are fatty acid oxidation disorders treated?

Treatment should be provided by a health care professional who has special experience caring for individuals with fatty acid oxidation disorders. Typically, a special diet may be prescribed and special precautions may need to be taken if the baby is sick. With proper management, medical problems that might result from having a fatty acid oxidation disorder may be prevented.

For more information, please contact:

The New Jersey Department of Health  
and Senior Services

Newborn Screening and Genetic  
Services at (609) 292-1582

or

The Inborn Errors of Metabolism  
Laboratory at (609) 292-3090

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## Fatty Acid Oxidation Disorders

Medium chain acyl-CoA dehydrogenase  
(MCAD) deficiency  
Short chain acyl-CoA dehydrogenase  
(SCAD) deficiency  
Long chain acyl-CoA dehydrogenase  
(LCAD) deficiency  
Very long chain acyl-CoA dehydrogenase  
(VLCAD) deficiency

### Important Information For Parents

