

What is Cystic Fibrosis?

Cystic fibrosis (CF) is a disorder that causes thick mucus to collect in the lungs and other body organs and may cause breathing problems, lung infections and poor digestion of food. Newborns with cystic fibrosis need frequent medical monitoring, including specialist care, as well as a healthy diet. Early treatment has been shown to improve growth and development in children with cystic fibrosis.

What causes Cystic Fibrosis?

Cystic fibrosis is inherited from both parents. It cannot be “caught” like a cold and cannot be “given” to another child.

How is Cystic Fibrosis 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 screening tests are done for cystic fibrosis and several other conditions. These tests are all part of the State’s Newborn Screening Program. If there is any abnormality, the baby’s doctor and parents are notified.

What does the lab look for?

The lab tests for IRT (a digestive enzyme). If the level of IRT is high, the lab will test for the presence of a special gene.

Does an abnormal screening test mean that my baby has Cystic Fibrosis?

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

What will my baby’s doctor do?

The baby’s doctor will work with a cystic fibrosis specialist and:

- Get a complete medical history and do a physical exam;
- Look for symptoms;
- Arrange for a “sweat test” to look for the amount of salt in the sweat. People with cystic fibrosis tend to have two to five times the normal amount of salt in their sweat.

How is Cystic Fibrosis treated?

Babies with cystic fibrosis should be treated by a cystic fibrosis specialist. A cystic fibrosis specialist will work with your baby’s doctor to prevent complications of the disorder. Together, they will formulate a plan of care that is appropriate for your child. Treatment can include a special diet and dietary supplements as well as medications and therapies that keep the airways open and prevent and treat infection.

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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Cystic Fibrosis (CF)

Important Information
for Parents

