What to Expect After Delivery of Your Newborn

This handout explains the care your baby may receive after birth to help prevent illness and find health concerns early.

After Birth Care

Eye Antibiotic
Your baby will get erythromycin as an eye gel or eye drops. This prevents bacterial infection from birth that can cause vision loss or long-term eye disease.

Vitamin K Shot
Babies are born with low vitamin K. We recommend a Vitamin K shot at birth to prevent serious, life threatening bleeding. Giving the vaccine helps form necessary clots and severe bleeding.

Hepatitis B Vaccine
This vaccine protects your baby from hepatitis B virus. Hepatitis B can cause lifelong liver damage. Infection can happen during birth or later in life. Giving the vaccine at birth protects your baby early.

Blood Sugar Checks
Your care team may check your baby's blood sugar. A small blood sample is taken from your baby's heel, just like a blood screening. Only a few drops of blood are needed. Tests are often done every 2-3 hours for a short time.

Newborn Screening Tests

Newborn Blood Screen
All newborns in the United States are screened for certain conditions that are not seen at birth. Early care can prevent or treat these conditions. During a blood screening, your care team takes a small blood sample from your baby's heel.

Hearing Screen
We will also check your child's hearing. Your baby wears earphones during the test. We use a software to check how your baby responds to sound.

Pulse Oximetry Test
This test checks for serious heart defects called critical congenital heart defects (CCHD). A sensor checks oxygen levels in your baby's blood.

Bilirubin Screen
A handheld device is placed on your baby's skin, often the forehead or chest. The device gives a quick estimate of bilirubin level. If the level is high, a heel poke is done for a more exact test.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 7/2026 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF# 8536