

BC Newborn Screening Program

Information Sheet

My Baby is Having a Sweat Test *What is it? How do I prepare?*

What is a sweat test?

- A sweat test measures how much salt is in your baby's sweat. A large amount of salt in sweat indicates CF.
- A special machine is used to make a small area on your baby's arm start to sweat. Your baby's skin may feel warm and tingly for 5 minutes while the machine is on. A tight strap is used to keep the machine attached to the baby, which can make the baby a little uncomfortable and he or she may cry a little. Holding your baby or breastfeeding her or him while the sweat is being collected helps comfort your baby.
- After the machine is removed, a piece of filter paper is put on the baby's arm using tape. The tape is covered with saran wrap and diapers to keep the area warm. The sweat collects on the filter paper for about 30 minutes.
- When the paper is taken off, part of the arm may be a little red. This is normal and does not hurt.
- You will be asked to wait 5-10 minutes while the filter paper is weighed to make sure there is enough sample to test.
- The weighed filter paper is sent to the lab where the amount of sweat and salt is measured.
- The collection takes about one hour from start to finish. Results of the sweat test are available as soon after the test as possible, often the same day.

Where is sweat testing done?

Sweat tests are done at BC Children's Hospital in Vancouver. During your visit, you will meet the CF Newborn Screening Team

and your baby will have a sweat test. Please plan to be at BC Children's Hospital for most of the day.

What do I need to do to prepare my baby for a sweat test?

- Give your baby plenty of fluids on the day of the test. This makes it easier for your baby to sweat.
- Bring a warm blanket, sweater and hat for your baby. Keeping your baby warm helps your baby to sweat.
- Do not use lotions or creams (including moisturizing soaps) on your baby's arms and legs on the day of the test.

What do the results of the sweat test mean?

There are four possible results:

1. Negative result: This means your baby does not have CF because a normal amount of salt was found in your baby's sweat. It is very rare for a person to have CF if the sweat test is normal. No additional testing is required and your baby should receive the same medical care as other healthy babies.
2. Positive result: A positive sweat test means that your baby probably has CF. Your baby will need to see a doctor who specializes in treating people with CF.
3. Borderline result: This means the sweat test result was at the upper end of normal, making it hard to tell whether your baby

does or does not have CF. A repeat sweat test, and other tests, will be needed to get more information.

4. Insufficient quantity: This means there was not enough sweat collected. You will be asked to bring your baby back on another day to try again.

Where can I get more information?

Talk to your family doctor. You may also contact the CF Newborn Screening Team at 604-875-2623 or pager 604-877-2876.

Information about the BC Newborn Screening Program can be found at www.newbornscreeningbc.ca.

Information about CF can be found at:

- GeneTests (hosted by the National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI))
www.genetests.org
- Canadian Cystic Fibrosis Foundation
www.cysticfibrosis.ca/
- Canadian Cystic Fibrosis Foundation (CCFF), Vancouver & Lower Mainland Chapter
www.cfvancouver.ca/
- For a listing of contacts for other CCFF chapters in BC:
www.cfvancouver.ca/

This fact sheet provides basic information only. It does not take the place of medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Always talk to your health care provider about specific health concerns.