

### 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 instrument is used to make a small area on your baby's arm or leg start to sweat. Your baby's skin may feel warm and tingly for 5 minutes while the instrument is on. A small strap is used to keep it attached to the baby, which can make the baby a little uncomfortable and they may cry a little. Holding your child may be of comfort.
- After the instrument is removed, a round plastic sweat collection disc will be put on your child's skin. This needs to be pressed tightly to the skin with a strap and gauze wrap. The sweat is collected into this disc for exactly 30 minutes.
- When the disc is removed, part of the skin may be red or have the shape of the disc imprinted on it. This is normal and does not hurt.
- The lab assistant will very carefully transfer the sweat from the disc to a little container and check to see that there is enough sweat for testing. Then the sample is sent to the lab to be tested.
- The collection takes about one hour from start to finish. Results of the sweat test are available within one week of collection.



Sweat collection disc secured on infant arm

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

- Give your baby plenty of fluids (breastmilk or formula) on the day of the test. This makes it easier for your baby to sweat.
- You can bring a blanket to keep your infant comfortable while the sweat is collected.
- Do not use lotions or creams (including moisturizing soaps) on your baby's arms or legs on the day of the test.
- Speak to the CF Newborn Screening Team about re-scheduling the test if your child is sick or has eczema on their skin. Sweat collection cannot occur when skin is inflamed or broken.

#### Where is sweat testing done?

Most 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.

#### What do the results of the sweat test mean?

There are four possible results:

1. **Negative result:** This means your child does not have CF because a normal amount of salt was found in your child's sweat. No additional testing is required.
2. **Positive result:** A positive sweat test means that your baby probably has CF. Your child will need to see a doctor who specializes in treating people with CF.
3. **Intermediate result:** This means results were in a range that can be seen in both healthy individuals and CF



patients. 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 to try again.

## Where can I get more information?

Talk to your primary care provider. You may also call the CF Newborn Screening Team at 604-875-2623.

Information about the BC Newborn Screening Program can be found at

[www.newbornscreeningbc.ca](http://www.newbornscreeningbc.ca)

Information about CF can be found at:

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

Information about the test can be found at:

<https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/tests-treatments-medications/medical-tests/sweat-test>

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.



Provincial Health  
Services Authority

Newborn Screening BC is a collaboration of Provincial Lab Medicine Services, BC Children's Hospital and BC Women's Hospital and Health Centre, and Perinatal Services BC, all part of the Provincial Health Services Authority.