

News Release

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For Immediate Release

Contact: Melissa Propp, Clinic Manager, 308-345-4223

A Healthy Start Begins with Newborn Screening

September is National Newborn Screening Awareness Month. Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) is helping raise awareness about newborn screening that can help find serious health conditions in babies soon after birth.

“Every baby deserves a healthy start,” explains Diana Garcia, Healthy Families Program Manager at SWNPHD. “Some health conditions do not have signs or symptoms that can be seen at birth. Newborn screening can help find these conditions early, giving families and healthcare providers the chance to begin treatment or other services as soon as possible.”

In Nebraska, around 60 babies have a health condition identified through newborn screening each year, according to the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. Newborn screening usually includes three important checks:

Blood Spot Screening – A few drops of blood are collected from the baby’s heel. The blood is tested for certain rare but serious health conditions that may not be noticeable at birth.

Hearing Screening – A quick and painless screening checks a baby’s hearing and can help find possible hearing loss early.

Critical Congenital Heart Disease (CCHD) Screening – A small sensor is placed on the baby to measure the oxygen level in their blood. This screening can help find certain serious heart problems that may need more testing or medical care.

Most babies will have normal newborn screening results. If a screening shows that more testing is needed, it is important for families to follow up with their baby’s healthcare provider. A screening result does not always mean that a baby has a health condition. It may simply mean that more testing is needed.

“Those first days with a new baby can be exciting, overwhelming, and full of new information for families,” said Diana Garcia, Senior Program Manager. “Newborn screening is an important step that parents may not think much about. These screenings can help find health concerns early and give families and healthcare providers the opportunity to respond quickly.”

Parents and caregivers can play an important role by asking their baby’s healthcare provider about newborn screening, knowing which screenings their baby received, and completing any recommended follow-up testing.

This September, SWNPHD encourages families to remember: **newborn screening is a small step that can make a lifelong difference.**

For more information about child health resources, contact Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department at 308-345-4223 or visit the website swhealth.ne.gov. SWNPHD serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. Follow @swnphd on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube.

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