

Propionic Acidemia (PA)

(Sounds like PRO-PEE-ON-IC ACID-E-MIA)



What is newborn blood spot screening?

This is a blood test, from a heel poke, that is done a day or 2 after babies are born to test for treatable conditions including propionic acidemia (PA) that you, your doctor, or midwife can't see by just looking at your baby. This screening test is different from those done during pregnancy.



What does it mean if my baby needs more tests for PA?

A baby needs to have more testing for PA when their screening test result is abnormal or positive. This doesn't mean your baby has PA. It means your baby has a higher chance of having the condition and will need more tests to find out if they have PA or not.

It's normal to feel worried if your baby needs more testing. Your specialists and other healthcare providers are there to support you. They'll explain what will happen and answer your questions.

What is PA?

PA is a metabolic condition that affects how your body uses protein and fat from the food you eat to make energy. This includes breastmilk and regular formula. With PA, your body can't break down certain amino acids which are the building blocks of protein. These amino acids then build up in your body and can cause serious health problems.

What are some early signs of PA?

Your baby may:

- be very sleepy (hard to wake for feedings)
- find it hard to feed well and gain weight
- vomit (more than spit-up after feeding)

What causes PA?

PA is genetic. This means babies with PA are born with a gene from both parents, which has a change in it. This change stops the gene from working properly. PA isn't caused by anything that happened during pregnancy.

There may be no signs of PA at birth. It's important to remember that this condition can't be seen by looking at your baby.



What can I expect with more testing?

Everything that will happen with more testing will be explained to you. Your baby may need to have their blood and urine tested to check for PA.

This testing may be done at a clinic in Edmonton or Calgary that specializes in PA.

What if more testing shows my baby has PA?

If testing shows that your baby has PA a specialized healthcare team will work with you to make a care plan for your baby. You and your baby will get the best care and support possible.

How is PA treated?

Babies with PA usually go on a low-protein diet and drink a special formula. They may also need special medicine. The specialized healthcare team will give you detailed instructions about how to manage your baby's health.



