



Severe Combined Immune Deficiency (SCID)

Shortly after your baby was born, a blood sample was obtained from his/her heel. Many tests were done on this sample. One of these tests is called the SCID test.

WHAT DOES THIS TEST LOOK FOR? The SCID test looks for a serious but rare disease called “Severe Combined Immune Deficiency.” The test also can find less severe immune problems. The SCID test looks for molecules (natural chemicals) that are normally made by infection-fighting cells in the blood. The molecules are called “TRECs,” which stands for “T-Cell Receptor Excision Circles.” The infection-fighting cells are called “white blood cells” because of how they look under a microscope.

WHAT DOES THIS TEST TELL ME ABOUT MY BABY? Low numbers of TRECs or white blood cells could mean the baby is at risk to develop infections. Infections can be mild or very serious in babies. The purpose of the TREC test is to find babies who are at risk for the serious infections, so they can receive the proper care they need.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE IF THE TEST IS ABNORMAL? The SCID test is only a screening test done at birth, so another blood test is needed. The purpose of this second test is to determine if there is a serious problem with a baby’s white blood cells. Your child’s doctor will make plans with you for the blood test to be done.

WHEN WILL I KNOW THE RESULTS OF THE BLOOD TESTS? Once blood has been drawn again for the repeat test, it takes several days for the laboratory to complete and report results back to your doctor. Your child’s doctor will contact you with the results. Your child’s doctor may also tell you if anything else needs to be done during this waiting period.

CAN TEST RESULTS BE UNCERTAIN? The test done at birth is not 100 percent accurate (this is true for most screening tests). The chance of being born with a very low number of white blood cells leading to serious infection is RARE. However, children born with this problem will look and act like a normal baby, so it is very important to do the blood test! If your child has this problem, they will need special care.

The content of this fact sheet has been reviewed by the Newborn Screening Advisory Subcommittee.



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