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ODH ADDS TO NEWBORN SCREENING PROGRAM

Cystic fibrosis, carnitine uptake defect added to panel of 30 mandatory screenings

COLUMBUS – The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) will add two disorders – cystic fibrosis (CF) and carnitine uptake defect (CUD) – to its panel of 30 mandatory newborn screenings. The additions, effective Aug. 30, bring to 32 the number of disorders all babies born in Ohio are screened for.

“Finding these disorders early can help children get a healthy start in life,” said ODH Director J. Nick Baird, M.D. “The State of Ohio cares deeply about the health of its children.”

John Banchy, state director for the Ohio Chapter of the March of Dimes, concurred.

“The March of Dimes is very pleased Ohio is adding screening for these two conditions,” he said “It is reassuring to know the nearly 150,000 babies born in Ohio each year will have a better opportunity to survive through early detection and treatment.”

Newborn screening has been recognized by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as one of the 50 most successful programs of the 20th century and is conducted in all 50 states. Ohio has had such a program since 1965 and has added disorders on a regular basis; descriptions of the two latest additions follow:

CF is a genetic disorder that affects about one in 2,000 whites and occurs less frequently in other races. People with CF have abnormally thick respiratory secretions that lead to chronic respiratory disease, pancreatic insufficiency, poor food absorption, poor growth and infertility. There is no known cure; however, treatments that focus on improving nutrition and reducing respiratory infections can improve a patient’s health. Daily respiratory treatments, routine monitoring and early infection treatment with antibiotics are recommended.

CUD is a rare, inherited disorder that affects the body’s ability to metabolize fatty acids. Symptoms vary but can include hypoglycemia, hyperammonemia and elevated liver enzymes. Carnitine supplements, frequent feeding and a high-carbohydrate, low-fat diet are recommended.

While the conditions on the panel are rare, some may cause major health problems if not treated early. Treatment options may include monitoring the baby’s health, medication, dietary supplements and/or special diets.

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