Can a baby with CCHD have a normal pulse ox reading?
Pulse ox screening can check for a common sign of CCHD—low oxygenation—but it may not detect all heart problems in all babies. For this reason, it’s important that you bring your baby to regular wellness visits with a primary care provider.

When to call your baby’s care provider
Contact your health care provider right away if you notice any of these signs and symptoms of CCHD in your newborn:

- Fast, difficult breathing when resting or sleeping
- Grunting sounds with breaths
- Bluish coloring of lips or skin
- Poor eating
- Extreme sleepiness

For Additional Information:
Visit your child’s primary health care provider

Call the Idaho Newborn Screening Program:
(208) 334-5962

Visit the CCHD Newborn Screening website:
newbornheartscreening.dhw.idaho.gov

Additional Newborn Screening Information:
childrensheartfoundation.org
mendedhearts.org
newsteps.org
savebabies.org

The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare is an equal opportunity employer, services, and program provider.

This publication was made possible by Grant No. B04MC32537 from the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration. Its contents are solely the responsibilities of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration. Idaho Maternal and Child Health Section.
What is critical congenital heart disease (CCHD)?
Critical congenital heart disease (CCHD) is one of the conditions found through newborn screening. CCHD refers to a group of heart defects that can be serious and life-threatening. These defects can include structural problems in the heart or problems with blood flow in the heart. These problems range from mild to severe. CCHD is often treatable, if caught early. Its cause is usually unknown.

Why is CCHD screening done?
Babies born with CCHD may appear healthy at first and may be sent home before their heart defect is detected. These babies are at risk for experiencing serious complications within the first few days or weeks of life and often need emergency care. Newborn screening identifies some of these babies so they can receive immediate care and treatment. Early diagnosis and proper treatment can make the difference between early death or lifelong impairment and healthy development.

What if my baby's pulse ox reading is low?
A low pulse ox reading means that the oxygen level in your baby’s blood are low, which can have many causes. An out-of-range screening result does not necessarily mean that your baby has CCHD. However, since some babies do have the condition, it is very important to talk about next steps with the healthcare providers where your baby was born.

Because the harmful effects of CCHD can develop shortly after birth, follow-up testing should be completed as soon as possible to determine whether or not your baby has a heart condition.

When is the screening done?
Screening must be done when the baby is at least 24 hours of age, or as late as possible if the baby will be discharged from the hospital before 24 hours of age.

How is the CCHD screening done?
Healthcare professionals check for CCHD by using pulse oximetry (or “pulse ox”). Pulse oximetry is a painless, noninvasive test that measures the amount of oxygen in your baby’s blood. It requires placing a sticky strip, like a band-aid that contains a sensor on the baby’s hand and foot. The strip is attached to a wire that connects to a monitor that reads the baby’s oxygen levels. The screening takes just a few minutes when your baby is still, quiet, and warm.

Congenital heart defects are the most common birth defect and impact approximately 8 out of every 1,000 babies born.

Of these 8 babies, approximately 25% are born with heart defects that are considered critical and require immediate intervention.

In Idaho, it’s estimated that about 55 babies are born each year with CCHD.