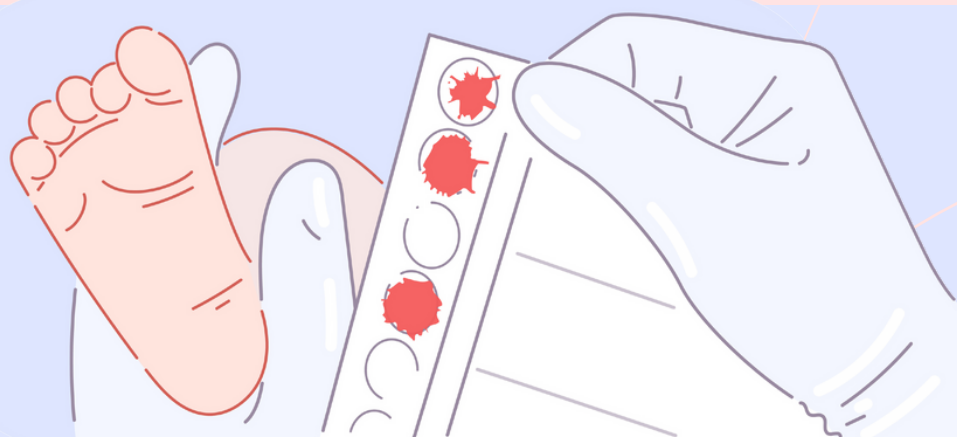


HIQA PROVIDES ADVICE ON ADDING CONDITION TO HEEL PRICK TEST

HIQA has provided advice on the addition of severe combined immunodeficiency (SCID) to the National Newborn Bloodspot Screening Programme (NNBSP)



Newborn bloodspot screening, known as 'the heel prick test', screens for nine conditions and happens within the first 72 to 120 hours of life.

SCID is a rare, but serious inherited condition that causes a child to have very low levels of T-cells (TCL). As a result, the child has a weak immune system and is very vulnerable to infection.



In May 2022, screening for ADA-SCID was introduced. This review examined expanding the screening programme to include all types of SCID.

"The benefits of screening can be considerable for children with SCID. Screening will find children before they present clinically with infections, allowing for earlier access to potentially curative treatment."



Dr Mairin Ryan,
Director of HTA

It is estimated that introducing screening for all types of SCID would cost the HSE €3.66 million over five years.

Operational considerations:

- establishing the testing method
- timing of implementation given planned move to the new children's hospital
- recruitment of laboratory staff
- management of non-SCID TCLs that may be identified through this form of screening

