



# Newborn Screening Bulletin 2023-1

January 31, 2023

## Screening for Biliary Atresia

In January 2023, Newborn Screening Ontario added biliary atresia to Ontario's newborn screening panel.

### What is biliary atresia?

Biliary atresia is a rare but serious disease where bile cannot get from the liver to the stool, resulting in acholic (pale) stools. The accumulation of bile in the liver is damaging and without intervention can result in the need for transplant or eventually death. Ontario has joined British Columbia as the second province in Canada to implement this type of screening.

### How do you screen for biliary atresia?

This is the first of its kind in Ontario to involve parents as the primary screener with the help of an **infant stool colour card (ISCC)** to identify acholic stools which are often an early symptom of biliary atresia. Parents are asked to compare their child's stool colour to the images on the ISCC during regular diaper changes for the first month of life. If they detect acholic stool, they are asked to contact NSO using the contact methods shown on the card. When identification and treatment start early, babies with biliary atresia can have a better chance to grow and develop normally.

For more information on screening for biliary atresia, please visit our [website](#).

### What does this mean for you?

To mark the launch of this initiative, NSO shipped a launch kit containing an initial supply of infant stool colour cards and educational materials to each birth hospital, midwifery practice, and birth centre in the province during the week of January 16.

- ISCCs are available, free of charge, for **ordering via the same distributor used for newborn screening dried bloodspot collection cards**. It is now important to also order an equivalent or higher number of ISCCs every time you place an order for DBS collection cards.

For more information: [www.newbornscreening.on.ca/supplies](http://www.newbornscreening.on.ca/supplies)

- If you would like to order more educational resources (posters, education scripts) for your organization, please contact the biliary atresia screening team.

**Please begin distributing infant stool colour cards to new parents and families as soon as possible.** We understand that it may take some time to implement at your organization. If you did not receive a launch kit or anticipate a delay distributing the cards, please let us know.

**Important:** Please send an email to [nsoba@cheo.on.ca](mailto:nsoba@cheo.on.ca) or reply to this submitter bulletin to let us know when you have started distributing infant stool colour cards!

**Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions about the information included in this bulletin. We thank you for your continued dedication to newborn screening.**

