FOR PATIENTS
AND CAREGIVERS

Tests to diagnose CF

Diagnosing cystic fibrosis (CF) is a multistep process. In addition to identifying any symptoms or family history of CF, a physician will perform additional tests to confirm a CF diagnosis.

What are the tests for CF?

Most people are diagnosed with CF before they are 2 years old, but some learn they have CF when they are adults.

Today, all newborns in the United States are tested for CF, but this hasn't always been the case. As a result, there are still young people and adults who have not been tested for CF.

Here are some tests that may be used to determine if a person has CF:

Prenatal screening test

- Either before or during pregnancy, parents may decide to be tested to see if one or both of them is a carrier of CF.

Newborn screening test

- This required newborn screening for CF is usually done within 3-5 days after birth. A few drops of blood from a heel prick are tested
- If this first blood test shows signs of CF, a sweat test will be done

Sweat test

- People with CF characteristically have higher-than-normal sweat chloride levels. A chemical is put on the skin to make it sweat. The sweat is collected to measure the salt levels

Genetic testing, or CF carrier test

- This test can show if a person is a carrier of CF. Some people with a family history of CF choose to have this test done before they begin to think of family planning

People diagnosed with CF *before* they show symptoms have better lung and nutrition outcomes later in life.

VERTEX