



Why should my baby's hearing be tested?

It is through hearing that your child will learn to talk. Three newborns per one thousand have permanent hearing loss. Although it is unlikely your baby will have a hearing loss, if there is one, it is important that you know about it as soon as possible.

The first two years of your child's life are the most important for learning speech and language. It is important to diagnose hearing problems early because a hearing loss can prevent your baby from learning speech and language.

Before your new baby leaves the hospital, we will do a hearing screening. The purpose of the screening is to check your baby's ability to hear and to help find those babies who need more hearing testing. We are screening for a mild hearing loss or greater.

How does the test work?

There are two types of tests used. Your baby will have one or both of these tests. Both tests are very safe and will not hurt your baby. Most babies sleep through the test.



- One test is called Evoked Otoacoustic Emissions (EOAE). A soft rubber ear piece is placed in your baby's outer ear and makes a soft clicking sound. Healthy ears will "echo" the click sound back to the ear piece in your baby's ear.
- The second type of test is called a Brainstem Auditory Evoked Response (BAER). Special sensors are placed on your baby's skin. A soft rubber earphone sends a series of quiet sounds into your sleeping baby's ear. The sensors measure the responses of your baby's hearing nerve. These responses are recorded and stored in a computer.



What if my baby is referred for a second screening test?

Some babies will need a second screening test. If your baby needs a second screening test (which is not unusual), it does not mean they have a hearing loss. The most common reasons a baby needs more testing are: (1) middle ear fluid or infection, (2) an ear canal blocked with debris, or (3) permanent hearing loss (3 of 1000 newborns).

It is important to have your baby's hearing re-screened as soon as possible. Most babies pass the second screening test. Those that need further testing are referred to an Audiologist for a diagnostic hearing evaluation.

What if my baby passes the hearing screening?

If your baby passed the hearing screening, you can be confident they have normal hearing at this time. However, hearing does not always remain normal over time. Children who get a lot of ear infections, a serious infection, chronic illness or have a family history of hearing loss may develop a hearing loss later.

If you have any concerns about your baby's hearing, tell your baby's doctor as soon as possible. Your doctor will provide medical help and make referrals for further testing.

What to watch for in your baby's hearing...

Birth to three months...

- Startles to sudden loud noises
- Stirs, wakes up, or cries to loud sounds
- Soothes or calms to your voice
- Makes cooing sounds

Three to six months...

- Begins to turn eyes or head to sounds
- Stops crying when spoken to
- Awakens easily to sounds
- Begins making vowel sounds such as "ah" and "ou"

Six to nine months...

- Looks for family members when named
- Turns head towards sounds
- Will respond to own name
- Responds to simple requests with gestures
- Begins babbling, such as "baba" and "mamama"
- Uses voice to get your attention

Nine to twelve months...

- Understands "No", "Bye bye"
- Responds to soft sounds
- Looks at pictures when named
- Repeats simple sounds that you make
- Uses voice when playing alone

For more information about newborn hearing screening contact your baby's regular doctor.

or contact:

Your hospital's newborn hearing screening program or Audiology department's contact information here

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PATIENT AND FAMILY EDUCATION

UNHS contact phone number here

Newborn Hearing Screening



No baby is too young for a hearing test...

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