

WHY TEST THE HEARING OF A NEWBORN?

- Hearing loss is one of the most common newborn problems. About 2 or 3 out of 1,000 babies are born deaf or hard of hearing.
- Learning language starts at birth. Language is especially important for brain development during the baby's first months. Without early help, hearing loss will cause delays in language, speech, and thinking abilities. Social and emotional skills may also be affected.
- Testing is the only way to know if a baby has hearing loss.

HOW IS MY BABY SCREENED?

Newborns are screened before leaving the hospital. There are two ways to check a baby's hearing. Both are safe and painless. In both types of tests a small sound is made in the baby's ear.

- One test, ABR, checks for brainwaves that show the baby's brain noticed the sound.
- The other kind of test, OAE, checks if the inner ear responds to the sound.

The baby usually sleeps during the tests.

Before leaving the hospital, parents are given the results of the baby's hearing test.

WHAT DO THE SCREENING RESULTS MEAN?

A "pass" means the baby can hear well enough to learn to talk.

A "refer" means the baby needs to have more testing. Some reasons for needing another test are:

- Fluid was still in the ear from the birth
- There was noise in the testing room
- The baby was moving during the test
- The baby has hearing loss

Most babies who need another screening have normal hearing. It is important to have the hearing screen done again, though. The hospital staff will tell you where this can be done.

If the next screening test is a "refer," the baby will need more hearing tests. A specialist called an audiologist will do this. If the baby has hearing loss, he/she may need hearing aids and/or other services.

HEARING LOSS IN OLDER BABIES

Sometimes an older baby develops hearing loss. They also can have problems with language and learning. Some causes of late onset hearing loss are:

- Injuries to the head or the ear
- Some types of illness
- Ear infections
- Certain types of medications
- Family history of childhood hearing loss

HEARING CHECKLIST

Parents are the first to notice hearing problems in children. Watch for the signs of normal hearing. Parents should speak to the baby's doctor about any concerns.

Birth to 3 Months

- Jumps or blinks to loud sounds
- Makes sounds like "ohh," "ahh"
- Quiets to mom's voice
- Watches the face of the speaker

Age 3 to 6 Months

- Turns head or eyes towards a sound
- Makes noise when talked to
- Enjoys rattles and other toys that make sounds
- Uses voice to make happy and unhappy sounds (laughs, giggles, cries, fusses)

Age 6 to 10 Months

- Babbles or makes strings of sounds ("ba, ba, ba, da, da, da")
- Knows names for common things
- Looks at things when someone talks about them
- Tries to repeat speech sounds

Age 10 to 15 Months

- Can point to and look at familiar people or objects when asked to
- Points to familiar objects like "dog" or "light"
- Responds to singing or music

Age 16 to 24 Months

- Answers "yes" or "no" questions
- Puts two words together ("eat cookie," "see car")
- Says 8-10 words
- Enjoys being read to



For information on available services, call:
Early Childhood Intervention
1-800-628-5115

For more information on hearing
screening or follow-up testing, contact:
Texas Early Hearing Detection
& Intervention Program (TEHDI)
1-800-252-8023

www.dshs.state.tx.us/audio/newbornhear.shtm



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