

If your Baby
is Referred for a
Diagnostic
Hearing Evaluation



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

Why does my baby's hearing need to be re-tested?



The results of the hearing screening show that your baby may be at risk for hearing loss. However, more testing is needed to confirm whether or not your baby does have a hearing loss. Approximately 3 in 1000 babies are born with a hearing loss. It is important to diagnose hearing problems as early as possible, because a hearing loss can prevent your baby from learning speech and language. The sooner you find out about a hearing loss, the sooner you can provide the necessary treatment to help your baby.

Does this mean my baby is deaf?

Not necessarily. There are several reasons why a baby may be referred for further testing. The most common reasons are:

- Middle ear fluid or infection
- An ear canal blocked with debris
- A permanent hearing loss

If your baby has been referred for further hearing testing, it is also

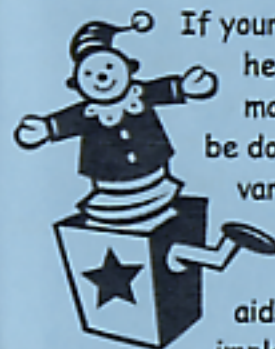
important to understand that there are varying degrees of hearing loss. A hearing loss can range from mild to profound (deaf).

- Babies with the mildest degrees of hearing loss will respond to you when you talk with them. They will also respond to louder sounds. However, they will have difficulty hearing the softest sounds of speech.
- Babies with the most severe degrees of hearing loss will have difficulty hearing speech and even very loud sounds. However, they will respond to you when you talk with them face to face.

The Pediatric Audiologist will do a complete diagnostic evaluation of your baby's hearing. If there is a hearing loss, your Audiologist will work with you to pinpoint the extent of your baby's usable hearing. The Audiologist will provide information about options available to help make the most of early language learning opportunities.



What if my baby does have a hearing loss?



If your baby does have a hearing loss, there are many things that can be done to help. A variety of assistive technology options such as hearing aids and cochlear implants, communication methods and early intervention programs are available to help you and your baby enjoy rich conversations with each other.

Professionals and other parents with experiences like yours will be there to support you through the decision making process. If your baby has a hearing loss, your Audiologist will help you obtain the services you and your baby may need.

The sooner you find out if your baby has a hearing loss, the sooner you can begin to help your baby learn to listen and develop language. Research shows that most children with hearing loss, whose families receive appropriate services before 6 months of age, are able to develop language normally.

What should I do now?

You should make an appointment with a Pediatric Audiologist for a diagnostic hearing evaluation as soon as possible. Any of the Audiologists on the list given to you can provide these services. Your baby's doctor can help you with any referrals that are needed for your appointment.

Continue to communicate with your baby as you normally would. Babies respond to the special intonation patterns and facial expressions that we reserve just for them. Lots of eye contact, touch, hugs and kisses help babies learn how to interact. Face to face conversations are good for all babies, but are especially important when a hearing loss is suspected. Have conversations with your baby as you normally would - you'll find that your baby takes delight in these conversations with you.

Having fun with your baby will help him or her feel secure and learn how to communicate with people confidently and effectively.



How can I get more information before my appointment with the Pediatric Audiologist?

Your baby's doctor can answer many of the questions you may have.

The following website is also an excellent source of useful information, support, and answers to questions you may have:

<http://www.babyhearing.org>

This brochure is part of the UNHS Project of Children's Hospital & Regional Medical Center, the Northwest Lions Foundation for Sight & Hearing, and the Washington State Department of Health

This project is supported in part by Project #H61 MC 00084 from the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (Title V, Social Security Act), Health Resources and Services Administration, Department of Health and Human Services



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Pub 06/02
(EH)