



Parent Education Pages

Newborn Hearing Screening

The Joint Committee on Infant Hearing (JCIH) has representatives from Pediatrics, Otolaryngology, Speech Language Pathology, Audiology, Deaf Education and State Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) programs. JCIH published a position statement in 2019 that provides guidance on the roles and responsibilities of the providers you may encounter on your journey with your newly identified child who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing (DHH).

Why is Hearing Tested in Newborns?

Newborn hearing screening measures a baby's auditory (hearing) system response when they hear sounds. All babies are required to get a hearing screening before they leave the hospital. While newborn hearing screening can't determine if your baby is deaf or hard of hearing, it will let you know if your baby needs more testing. All screening and rescreening should be completed by one month of age (unless your baby's medical condition won't allow).

Expectations of the Hearing Screening

The newborn hearing screening is usually the beginning of the journey for parents of a child who is deaf or hard of hearing. The JCIH position statement indicates that parents should expect:

- That their baby will have their hearing screened close to the time of going home and that they may be retested if the first screen does not result in a pass.
- Both ears should be rescreened even if only one didn't pass the first time.
- To clearly understand what the results of the screening are and what the next steps should be.
- An appointment for an outpatient screen or the diagnostic audiology evaluation will be made at the time of screening, if possible.

Babies can have hearing loss even if there is no family history. In fact, 90% of babies with hearing loss are born to hearing parents.

Hearing Screening Results

- A pass result means it is likely that your baby does not have a hearing loss right now.
- A refer/fail result means that your baby needs further testing to find out if a hearing loss is present.
- A screening can't tell you for sure if your baby has a loss or how much of a loss they may have. It also can't tell you if your baby is at risk for hearing loss that may show up later.

Guidelines

The information shared here is simplified language of the guidelines set forth by the JCIH. The guidelines were written for professionals and families to set standards of care for children through the hearing screening, diagnosis and early intervention process. Parents should consider these overall recommendations and timelines may vary based on family circumstances.



[My Baby Did Not Pass Their Test](#)



[Types of Hearing Tests](#)



[Why Do We Test Their Hearing](#)



[Diagnostic Hearing Test](#)

What Families Should Expect After Screening

- Communication with families about the hearing screening should be confidential and presented in a caring manner, preferably face-to-face.
- Written materials for parents should be easily understood and in the preferred language of both parents.
- Clearly stated next steps for the baby along with the importance of prompt follow up.
- The hospital or birthing center should have more than one contact number for you so they can reach you for follow up, if needed.
- The next appointment should be made for either an outpatient rescreen or an audiology evaluation with an audiologist that has the equipment and experience to test infants.

About the Next Test

- A medical referral will most likely be needed and should be provided as soon as possible from your baby's primary care provider to see a pediatric audiologist for diagnostic testing.
- Many pediatric audiology clinics prioritize hearing test appointments for infants who failed the newborn hearing screening. A list of qualified pediatric audiology facilities is found here: www.EHDIPals.org.
- Delaying an appointment for the follow up hearing test may mean that your baby will need to be sedated for the test and also have a delay in getting Early Intervention (EI) services that can help your baby learn language at the same rate as hearing babies.

If Your Baby's Hearing Wasn't Tested After Birth

- If you decided that you didn't want the hearing screening while you were in the hospital or missed the screening, you can still request a hearing test at any time. It is important the screening is completed by one month of age so that the full evaluation (if needed) can be done before the baby is three months of age.

Special Considerations

If your baby is in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) for more than a few days, the hearing screening process may look different. Important considerations if your baby has been in the NICU:

- Babies that spend more than a few days in the NICU are much more likely to be deaf or hard of hearing.
- Screening may happen close to when your baby goes home or earlier, depending on what other medical conditions are present.
- The screener may use different equipment than they do outside of the hospital or with well babies.
- If your hospital is equipped to do so, a pediatric audiologist may complete the diagnostic evaluation while your baby is in the NICU.