

Newborn Hearing Screening

Screening Test Results

Baby's Name: _____

- Pass
 Refer
 Waive
 Refer for diagnostic evaluation

Follow-up Audiology Appt:

Date: _____

Time: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____



You can't tell from looking if your baby has a hearing loss. Testing is the best way to find out.

You have so many wonderful plans to make when you're going to have a baby—and lots of important decisions. One decision is whether to have your baby's hearing tested. If your baby is delivered at a Kaiser Permanente hospital, you can have your newborn's hearing screened before you even leave the hospital.

Why test a baby?

You can't tell from looking if your baby has a hearing loss. Testing is the best way to find out. Thanks to technology, hearing loss can be reliably detected soon after a baby is born.

Early testing can make a big difference. Babies learn to communicate and talk in the first few months and years of life. (See "Ages and Stages" on the back of this page to read what most babies do at different ages.) A baby who has a hearing loss may have a hard time developing language skills, and as a child, may not do well in school. The sooner a hearing loss is found, the sooner you and your family can get the care that you need.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends hearing screening for all newborns, and paying close attention to your child's hearing throughout childhood.

Do many babies have a hearing loss?

Out of every 1,000 babies born, two to four of them have a serious hearing loss. About half of all babies with hearing loss have no known signs or risk factors (like serious illness or family history of deafness). Some babies may develop hearing loss from repeated ear infections, meningitis, a head injury, or other medical conditions. Sometimes babies lose their hearing and the reason is never known.

How do we screen hearing?

The newborn hearing screening takes place before you and your baby leave the hospital. It takes only a few minutes while your baby sleeps, and it doesn't hurt. Soft sounds are played through earphones specially made for babies. Your baby's response to the sound is measured automatically.

The cost is a covered Kaiser Permanente benefit. You will receive the results before you leave the hospital. Your baby will receive either a *hearing screening pass* or a *hearing screening refer*.

Hearing screening pass

This means that your baby hears normally in both ears at this time. It is important to pay attention to how your baby's language and speech develop. If you are worried about your baby's hearing, contact your baby's doctor right away.

Hearing screening refer

This does *not* necessarily mean that your baby has a hearing loss. It isn't always possible to get a good first screen. Many babies need a second screening. It is best to re-screen your baby between one week and one month of age. The hospital will make a re-screen appointment for you. This is separate from your two-week appointment with your baby's doctor.

What can I prepare for my baby's hearing re-screening?

It helps if your baby is asleep during the test. To get ready for the hearing re-screening, you might:

- Try not to let your baby nap before the appointment, so the baby sleeps during the test.
- Feed your baby just before testing to help your baby sleep.
- Bring a blanket, extra diapers, change of clothes, and extra formula, if used.
- Try to schedule the appointment for a time when your baby is likely to sleep.

What happens after the re-screening?

You and your baby's doctor will get the results of the second screening. It is likely that your baby will pass the re-screen. A few babies will need a more complete diagnostic hearing evaluation.

Diagnostic hearing evaluation

If your baby did not pass the hearing re-screen, the next step in checking your baby's hearing is a diagnostic hearing evaluation. This should be done as soon as possible.

Hearing and Speech: *Ages and Stages*

Birth to 3 Months

- Quiets to familiar voices or sounds
- Reacts to loud sounds: baby startles, blinks, stops sucking, cries, or wakes up
- Makes soft sounds when awake, baby gurgles

3 to 6 Months

- Turns eyes or head toward sounds, voices, noise making toys, dog barking
- Starts to make speech-like sounds, "ga," "ooh," "ba," and p, b, m sounds
- Reacts to a change in your tone of voice

6 to 9 Months

- Responds to own name and looks when called
- Understands simple words, "no," "bye-bye," "juice"
- Babbles, "da da da," "ma ma ma," "ba ba ba"

9 to 12 Months

- Responds to both soft or loud sounds
- Repeats single words and imitates animal sounds
- Points to favorite toys or foods when asked

12 to 18 Months

- Uses 10 or more words
- Follows simple spoken directions, "get the ball"
- Points to people, body parts or toys when asked
- "Bounces" to music

18 to 24 Months

- Uses 20 or more words
- Combines two or more words, "more juice," "what's that?"
- Uses many different consonant sounds at the beginning of words, b, g, m
- Listens to simple stories and songs

2 Years to 3 Years

- Uses 2 to 3 word sentences
- At 2 years, people can understand what the child says some of the time (25 to 50 percent)
- At 3 years, people can understand what the child says most of the time (50 to 75 percent)
- Follows two-step instructions, "get the ball and put it on the table"

The evaluation tests your baby's hearing in different ways to get a complete picture of your baby's hearing. Your baby needs to sleep comfortably during most of the evaluation. (See the tips above for preparing for your baby's hearing re-screening.)

After the evaluation, you and your baby's doctor will receive the results and a report. If a hearing loss is found, you will be referred to the care and community resources you and your baby will need.

Other resources

- Connect to our Web site at kp.org.
- Check your *Kaiser Permanente Healthwise Handbook*.
- Visit your facility's Health Education Department or Center for books, videos, classes, and additional resources.



If you have any concerns about your baby's hearing, contact your baby's doctor or other medical professional.



Hearing screening is recommended for all newborns.