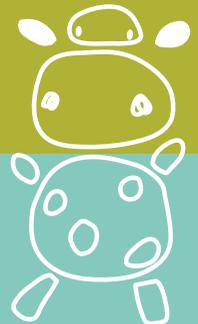
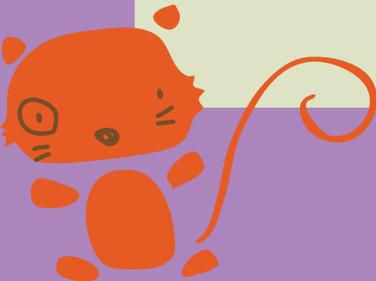
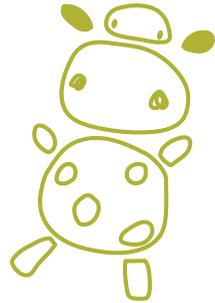




Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Your Baby's Hearing Screening Test





Your baby's hearing screening test

We will offer your baby a routine hearing screening test before your baby is discharged from hospital. This test uses quick and simple methods to check the hearing of all newborn babies.

Why screen my baby's hearing?

One to two babies in every 1,000 are born with a hearing loss in one or both ears. It is not easy to identify that a young baby has a hearing loss. This hearing screening test will allow those babies who do have a hearing loss to be identified early. Early identification is known to be important for the development of the child. It also means that support and information can be provided to parents at an early stage.

No one in my family has a hearing loss. Does my baby still need to have the hearing screening test?

Yes. It is important to screen all babies. Most babies born with a hearing loss are born into families with no history of hearing loss.

Will the hearing screening test be painful for my baby?

No. It does not hurt and is not uncomfortable. The screening test will usually be done while your baby is asleep or settled.

What does the hearing screening test involve?

- A trained hearing screener carries out the hearing screening test.
- The test is called Automated Otacoustic Emissions (AOAE).
- The AOAE screening test only takes a few minutes. You can stay with your baby while the screening test is done.

- The screener places a small soft tipped earpiece in the outer part of your baby's ear. Clicking sounds are sent down the ear.
- When an ear receives sound, the inner part, known as the cochlea, usually produces an echo.
- The screening equipment can pick up this echo.

When will I get the results of the hearing screening test?

We will give you the results at the time of the screening test. If you have any concerns or questions about your baby's result contact the Newborn Hearing Screening Programme. The telephone number is listed at the back of this booklet.

Some babies need a second hearing test

Why does my baby need a second hearing screening test?

A lot of babies need to have a second hearing screening test because the first screen didn't show a clear response from both of the baby's ears. This does not necessarily mean that your baby has a hearing loss.

Some common reasons, other than hearing loss, for having a second screening test are:

- Your baby may have been unsettled at the time of screening.
- There may have been background noise when the screening test was carried out.
- Your baby may have fluid or a temporary blockage in the ear after the birth. This is very common and will pass with time.

Where will the second screening test be done?

Your baby's second screen will usually be done before you leave the hospital.

What does the second screening test involve?

The second screening test may be the same as the first screening test, the Automated Otoacoustic Emission (AOAE) screening test. The AOAE screening test takes a few minutes.

Your baby may also have another type of screening test. This is known as the Automated Auditory Brainstem Response (AABR) screening test.

- The screener places three small sensors on your baby's head and neck.
- Soft headphones, specially made for babies, are placed over your baby's ears and a series of clicking sounds are played.
- The hearing screening equipment tells us how well your baby's ears respond to sound.
- The AABR screening test can take between 5 and 30 minutes.

You can stay with your baby while the screening test is done.

Neither of the screening tests will hurt or be uncomfortable for your baby. They will usually be carried out while your baby is asleep or settled.

What can I do to prepare my baby for the second screening test?

The screening test is easier to carry out if your baby is asleep. Don't worry if your baby will not settle. The hearing screener will understand that it is difficult to get a young baby to sleep. The

following may help your baby settle during the screening test:

- If possible, feed your baby shortly before the screening test.
- Ensure you have the things you may need to make your baby comfortable and happy.

My baby seems to be responding to sound. Does my baby still need a second hearing screening test?

Most babies are found to have no hearing loss after the second screening test, but it is still very important that your baby has the second screen. This is because babies who have a hearing loss will usually react to some sounds. If your baby does have hearing loss it is important that you find out as soon as possible.

What do the results mean if the second hearing screening test shows a clear response from both of my baby's ears?

This means that your baby is unlikely to have a hearing loss.

Remember that children can develop or acquire a hearing loss later on so it is important to check your child's hearing as they grow up.

After the hearing screening test we will give you two *Checklists* of sounds that your baby should react to, and the types of sounds that they should make as they grow older.

If you have any concerns about your child's hearing, discuss them with your public health nurse or general practitioner (family doctor). Your child's hearing can be tested at any age.

What happens if the second screening test does not show a clear response from one or both of my baby's ears?

If the second test does not show a clear response from one or both of your baby's ears you will be referred to the Audiology Clinic (hearing clinic). At the Audiology Clinic, they will carry out special tests to measure your baby's hearing. Again, this often happens and does not necessarily mean that your baby has hearing loss.

There may be a number of other reasons why the second screen could not record a clear response from one or both of your baby's ears. Further tests by an audiologist (a person who specialises in hearing) will give you better information about your baby's hearing.

We will give you a leaflet explaining what this involves.

What is the likelihood of my baby having a hearing loss if the second screening test does not record clear responses?

Most babies will record clear responses to sound at the second screening test and at the further tests carried out by an audiologist. There is, however, a possibility that your baby may have hearing loss.

Nationally, about one in 25 babies whose second screening test does not record clear responses may have a hearing loss in one or both ears. Finding out that your baby has a hearing loss means that you and your baby will get advice and support right from the start.

Where can I get further information?

If you would like more information about your baby's hearing screening test, you can contact the Newborn Hearing Screening Programme, the telephone number and contact details are listed at the back of this booklet.

