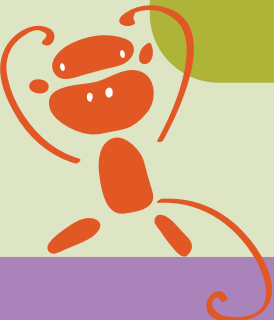
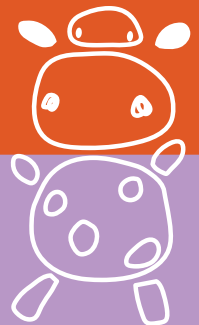
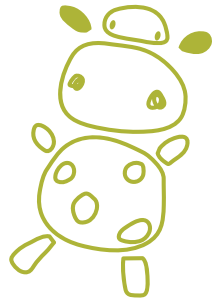
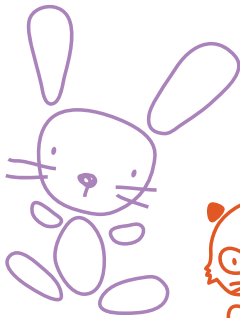




Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Your Baby's Visit to the Audiology Clinic (Hearing Clinic)





Your baby has been referred to the Audiology Clinic (Hearing Clinic) for further hearing tests. This is a clinic specialising in hearing and has special equipment, which can test your baby's hearing. This leaflet explains why these are needed and what is involved.

An audiologist (a person who specialises in hearing) carries out the hearing test at the Audiology Clinic, which will give you more information about your baby's hearing.

Early testing means that if a baby has a hearing loss the parents will know about it when their baby is very young. This is known to be important for the development of the child.

It also means that parents can receive the information and support they need at an early stage.

Why does my baby need further tests?

Many babies need to have further tests because the first hearing screening tests did not show a clear response in one or both ears. This is common and can be due to a number of different things other than a hearing loss.

- Your baby may have been too unsettled at the time of the screening test.
- Your baby may have had fluid, or a temporary blockage, in the ears, after the birth.
- There may have been too much background noise in the room when the screening test was carried out.

Being sent for further tests does not necessarily mean your baby has a hearing loss.

What is the likelihood of my baby having a hearing loss?

Most babies tested at the Audiology Clinic will be found to have no hearing loss.

There is, however, a possibility that your baby may have a hearing loss. Overall, about one to two babies in every 1,000 are born with a hearing loss in one or both ears.

Finding this out early means that you and your baby will get advice and support right from the start.

My baby seems to be responding to sound. Do I need to take my baby for further tests?

It is important that you attend the appointment. This is because babies who have a hearing loss will usually react to some sounds. If your baby does have a hearing loss, it is important to find out as soon as possible.

What tests will they do at the Audiology Clinic?

The tests carried out at the Audiology Clinic will be like those used for your baby's screening test, but they will be able to give more detailed information about your baby's hearing. The tests are usually carried out while your baby is asleep or settled.

1 Otoacoustic Emission (OAE) test

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

2 Auditory Brainstem Response (ABR) test

- The audiologist places small sensors on your baby's head.
- Headphones are placed over your baby's ears and a series of clicking sounds are played.
- A computer measures how well your baby's ears respond to sound.

The appointment will usually take about one to two hours. This includes time to settle your baby. The tests will not hurt or be uncomfortable for your baby. You will be able to stay with your baby while the tests are done.

What will happen after the tests?

Your audiologist will tell you when the results of the tests will be available. Sometimes it will be necessary to repeat this test at a later date. When you get the results the Audiology Clinic will be able to explain them to you.

If you have any concerns about the results, or you have any questions, contact the Audiology Clinic. You can find the contact details at the back of this leaflet.

What happens if the tests record a strong response from both of my baby's ears?

This means that your baby is unlikely to have a hearing loss. 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 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 if the tests still do not record a strong response from one or both of my baby's ears?

If this happens your audiologist will explain what the results mean. Further tests may be needed before you know about your baby's hearing. There are different types and levels of hearing loss. The results of the tests done at the clinic will help the audiologist ensure that you and your baby get the right support and information.

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 is listed at the back of this booklet.



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