

Hearing In Infants & Young Children



A Guide For Parents

For more information talk to your baby's doctor, nurse or audiologist.

Maine Newborn Hearing Program

The Maine Newborn Hearing Program was established by law in 2000. The program was set up to provide information to families about hearing screening, evaluation and services. Hospitals are required to tell new families about the importance of newborn hearing screening. If the hospital does not offer the screening test, it must help you arrange to have the test done somewhere else. This booklet is to help you understand that it is important to test your baby's hearing shortly after birth.

Why is it important to test my baby's hearing?

It is important to know about any hearing loss as soon as possible. Knowing about hearing loss early helps us to give a child the special help needed for language and social development.

Hearing loss is one of the most common problems in newborns. As many as 50 babies born in Maine each year may have a hearing problem.

The first two years of a child's life are critical for speech and language development. You can't always tell by watching a baby how well he/she can hear. Studies show that most children with severe to profound hearing loss aren't found until they are over two years old. Most children have already begun learning words and talking by that age.



How is the screening test done, how long will it take and will it hurt my baby?

Soft sounds are presented to your baby's ears through earphones or other listening device. Electrodes that look like stickers placed on your baby's head will pick up the response to those sounds from your baby's brain or cochlea (inner ear). The result is given as either PASS or REFER.

This screening test is done when your baby is asleep or quiet and can take as little as 15 minutes. It does not hurt your baby.

What does PASS or REFER mean?

If your baby has a PASS result, it means that your baby's hearing was normal at the time of screening. If your baby has a REFER result, this means that your baby needs to have a follow up test. This is not unusual. Some things can interfere with screening such as birth fluid in the ear canal and noise in the testing area. A REFER result may also mean that your baby has a hearing loss. You will be told about a second screening test or other testing if needed. Your baby's doctor or nurse will help you to arrange for follow-up testing.

What are the signs of a hearing loss and what can I do for my baby?

The result of the hearing screening at the hospital shows how your baby was hearing on that day. As a parent, you know your baby best and you will want to monitor your baby's hearing and speech as they grow. Some tips can be found on the next two pages. If you have a concern about your baby's hearing at any time, talk to your baby's doctor. Save this booklet to help you observe your baby's hearing through age two.

Your baby should:

Birth to 3 months:

- ☞ Startle to a sudden loud noise.
- ☞ Soothes or calms to your voice.
- ☞ Squeals, coos, laughs.

3 - 6 months:

- ☞ Turns head or moves eyes to find a familiar voice.
- ☞ Plays at making noises and sounds.
- ☞ Likes sound making toys.

6 - 9 months:

- ☞ Responds to his/her own name.
- ☞ Begins to understand common words like "no," and "bye-bye."
- ☞ Imitates speech by making sounds like coughing, clicking tongue, smacking lips.
- ☞ Will watch you and listen when you read nursery rhymes.

9 - 12 months:

- ☞ Repeats simple words and sounds that you make, jabbars.
- ☞ Points or reaches for familiar objects when asked.
- ☞ Responds differently to happy or angry talking.
- ☞ Follows simple directions.

12 - 18 months:

- ☞ Bounces to music.
- ☞ Talks in what sounds like sentences, with a few understandable words.
- ☞ Identifies people, body parts and toys.
- ☞ Enjoys listening to stories read aloud.

18 - 24 months:

- ☞ Understands you when you call from another room.
- ☞ Points to body parts when asked.
- ☞ Begins to speak in two-word combinations, such as "Mommy, more!"
- ☞ Prefers certain books and brings them to you.

What you should be doing:

Birth to 3 months:

- ☞ Whenever your baby makes sounds try to imitate them. Use a pleasant voice when talking to your baby.
- ☞ Hold your baby close to you, often rocking, singing, talking quietly and reading.
- ☞ Talk to your baby using his/her name while you work around the house, "Hello, Johnny."

3 - 9 months:

- ☞ Keep imitating your baby's sounds, talk a lot with him/her.
- ☞ Hold your baby close to you, often singing, reading nursery rhymes, stories or talking.
- ☞ Talk with your baby about his/her toys, and play games like "Peek-a-boo" or "Pat-a-cake."



9 - 12 months:

- ☞ Make simple speech sounds to see if your baby will imitate you (bah-bah, gah-gah).
- ☞ Pay attention to see if your baby says "Mama", "Dada."
- ☞ Talk with your baby about his or her toys and items in your house. Play singing games.
- ☞ Point to picture in their books and talk about them.

12 - 18 months:

- ☞ Show your baby his/her body parts, "Here's baby's nose, eye, ear," etc.
- ☞ Show simple picture books, helping to turn the pages, talk about the pictures.
- ☞ Play: "Where's Daddy? (Mommy?) and point to Daddy (Mommy). "Where's the doggy? (or a toy)," "What does the doggy say? Bow-wow."

18 - 24 months:

- ☞ Read simple stories to your child and ask questions "Where's the kitty?" and point out the picture.
- ☞ Give instructions, "Put the doll on the chair," "Put the ball in the box."

Resources in your area:

An appointment has been scheduled for your baby for a screening test or follow-up evaluation (circle one):

Date: _____ Time: _____

Provider (Hospital Nursery, Audiologist)

Address:

If you need to reschedule, please call directly at:

NO BABY IS TOO YOUNG
FOR A HEARING TEST...
ASK YOUR PROVIDER



MAINE NEWBORN
HEARING PROGRAM

Maine Department of Human Services
Bureau of Health
Division of Family Health
Maine Newborn Hearing Program
11 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333-0011
1-800-698-3624
TTY 207-287-8015

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Governor



on

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This information is available in alternate formats upon request.