

newborn hearing screening and your baby...

Approximately three babies in every 1,000 have some degree of hearing loss. Only half of the children with hearing loss have known family history of hearing problems or other risk factors for hearing loss. The American Academy of Pediatrics, American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, National Institute of Health, Joint Committee on Infant Hearing, and United States Department of Health and Human Service recommends that all newborns be screened.

timing is everything...

The Vermont Universal Newborn Hearing Screening Program's goal is to screen all babies for hearing loss at birth or before one month of age. Babies with any degree of hearing loss will have the best chance for normal language development if hearing loss is diagnosed by 3 months of age and early intervention is provided by 6 months of age.

"IMAGINE BEING DEAF.
NOW IMAGINE YOU CAN'T TELL ANYONE.
TEST EARLY."

ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL ASSOCIATION



Vermont Department of Health
Division of Health Improvement
108 Cherry Street
PO Box 70
Burlington, Vermont 05402

For more information or to request
this brochure in an alternate format, please call
800-660-4427 x 1333 (V/TTY)
or 802-865-1333

SUPPORTED BY GRANT H61 MC00070-01 FROM
HEALTH RESOURCES AND SERVICES ADMINISTRATION'S
MATERNAL & CHILD HEALTH BUREAU.

Can my baby hear?

Information for families about

NEWBORN HEARING SCREENING

Vermont Department of Health
Division of Health Improvement
Children With Special Health Needs

and why is it so important?

Babies begin developing speech and language from the moment they are born. When sounds and voices can't be heard, language learning is often delayed. Unfortunately, hearing loss is easily missed in the early years of life. Parents think they would be able to tell if their baby could not hear. This is not always the case. Babies respond to noise by startling or turning their heads towards sound. This does not mean they have normal hearing. Most babies with hearing loss can hear some sounds but not enough to develop language or speech properly.

Newborn hearing screening can detect possible hearing loss in the first days of a baby's life. If hearing loss is suspected, further tests will be done to confirm the results. If a hearing loss is confirmed, early intervention can start right away.

what is hearing loss?

Hearing loss is the decreased ability to hear sounds in one or both ears. It may be mild to profound, temporary or permanent and can make it difficult to hear different kinds of sounds which are essential in learning to talk.

how is newborn hearing screening performed?

There are two screening tests which are quick, painless and may be done while your baby is sleeping or lying still. Either or both tests may be used.

Automated Auditory Brainstem Response (AABR) measures how the brain responds to sound. Clicks or tones are played through soft earphones into the baby's ears.

Otoacoustic Emissions (OAE) measures sound waves produced in the inner ear by a tiny probe placed just inside the baby's ear canal. It measures the response (echo) when clicks or tones are played into the baby's ears.

who does the screening?

Hearing screening can be done in the hospital or birth center by nurses, technicians, and audiologists.

What can families expect as the result of newborn hearing screening?

The results of the hearing screening will be either PASS or REFER.

A PASS result means your baby's hearing test was normal at that time. Follow up screening is recommended if known risk factors exist, such as: parental concern, family history of hearing loss, or a stay in the neonatal intensive care unit.

A REFER result means your baby did not pass the hearing test but it does *not* mean that your baby has a hearing loss. Some things can interfere with screening such as birth fluid in the ear canal and noise in the testing area. It is very important to have further testing. Check with your baby's primary care provider to make sure follow up testing has been scheduled.

IF MY BABY HAS A CONFIRMED REFER RESULT, WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT?

If the REFER result is confirmed, your baby will be scheduled for a diagnostic hearing evaluation.

IF A DIAGNOSTIC EVALUATION CONFIRMS HEARING LOSS, WHAT CAN BE DONE?

If your baby has a hearing loss, early intervention is essential. Some hearing losses may be medically correctable but most are permanent. Amplification may be appropriate and can be used at a very early age.

WHAT IF MY BABY DID NOT RECEIVE HEARING SCREENING AS A NEWBORN?

If your baby's hearing was not tested, call your primary care provider to have your baby screened as soon as possible. Your baby is never too young for a hearing test. Talk to your primary care provider if you are concerned about your baby's hearing or speech development. Referral for a hearing screening test can be made by calling the Hearing Outreach Project (HOP):

800-537-0076 (V/TTY)