Why Screen Newborns?

Newborn hearing screenings are extremely important. When newborns have hearing loss and are diagnosed early, effective intervention is available to help them achieve normal or nearly normal speech, language, and hearing milestones.

- Approximately 3-6 of every 1,000 newborns have significant hearing problems.
- More than 95 percent of newborns who are born deaf have parents with normal hearing.
- Hearing loss is invisible; it cannot be seen by examining your newborn’s ears.
- Most newborns with hearing loss have no signs or symptoms.

What Should I Know About the Hearing Screening?

- Hearing screenings are fast, safe, and painless.
- Sometimes newborns are screened more than once.
- Hearing screenings take about 10 minutes.
- Newborn babies can sleep through the hearing screening.
- You will receive your hearing screening results before you leave the hospital.

The Joint Committee on Infant Hearing (JCIH) Year 2007 Position Statement

The American Academy of Audiology, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, the Council on Education of the Deaf, and the Directors of Speech and Hearing Programs in State Health and Welfare Agencies have joined together to endorse universal detection of infants with hearing loss. The goal is that all infants with hearing loss will be identified before three months of age and receive intervention by six months of age.

Newborn Hearing Screening

All newborns should be screened for hearing loss. Make sure your newborn’s hearing is screened before leaving the hospital.

American Academy of Audiology
What if My Newborn Does Not Pass the Hearing Screening?
Some newborns who need a follow-up hearing screening or a hearing test have normal hearing—but some have hearing loss.

If your newborn does not pass the screening, it is important to make an appointment with an audiologist for a complete hearing test.

What if My Newborn Passes the Hearing Screening?
Newborns who pass the screenings usually have normal hearing. However, some newborns might hear well enough to pass a screening, even though their hearing is not perfectly normal.

Some newborns may pass the screening, but then can lose hearing from illness, medications, or genetic reasons—after leaving the hospital. Therefore, even if your newborn passes the screening, tell your audiologist or physician if you suspect hearing loss later.

Speech Language and Hearing Skills
An infant with normal hearing should be able to do the following:

Around two months of age
- Startles to loud sound
- Quiets to familiar voices
- Makes vowel sounds such as “ohh”

Around four months of age
- Looks for sound sources
- Starts babbling
- Makes squeals and chuckles

Around six months of age
- Turns head toward loud sounds
- Begins to imitate speech sounds
- Babble sounds such as “ba-ba”

Around nine months of age
- Imitates speech sounds of others
- Understands “no-no” or “bye-bye”
- Turns head toward soft sounds

Around 12 months of age
- Can say “ma-ma” or “da-da”
- Gives toy when asked
- Responds to singing or music

Most States Require Newborn Hearing Screening Tests
If your infant has had a hearing screening and is unable to do some of the examples to the left (based on his or her age), schedule a follow-up appointment with an audiologist to have his or her hearing checked again.

Hearing loss in infants is a hidden disability, and it is important to pay attention to their development and get their hearing tested.

If an appointment has been made for your newborn’s next hearing test, make sure you have the following information:

- Audiologist’s Name
- Office Name
- Office Phone Number
- Appointment Date
- Appointment Time
- Appointment Location/Address

Sampling Sample