

Your Baby's Hearing: It is Important to Test Again

EARLY HEARING DETECTION AND INTERVENTION (EHDI)

This fact sheet attempts to answer some of the more common questions parents have about their baby's "refer" or "did not pass" result on their newborn hearing screen.

- **Hearing loss isn't very common, so my baby probably doesn't have it. Right?**

Hearing loss affects about 1 to 3 newborns per 1,000 births and is considered one of the most common conditions that can be identified at birth. The only way to know whether your baby has permanent or temporary hearing loss is to see an audiologist as soon as possible.

- **What if my baby reacts to loud sounds or when I clap next to their head?**

Many babies with hearing loss startle to loud noises, even when they can't hear softer sounds, such as voices. To know whether your baby has decreased hearing in the range where speech is heard, an objective hearing screening is needed to measure their response to sound.

- **My baby can't talk yet, so I'm not in a rush to check their hearing. Can we test again later if we notice anything?**

If you wait to check your child's hearing and they are identified with hearing loss later, your baby could fall behind in development of language skills.

Before a baby can communicate, they watch, listen, and learn the sounds of different words and other crucial aspects of speech and language. Infants identified with hearing loss by 3 months of age can begin early intervention, get connected to resources, and avoid speech and language delays.



- **Do infants need to be sedated to complete diagnostic testing?**

Younger infants (less than 6 months of age) can typically be tested without sedation.

- **My baby has fluid in their ear. Will the test still work correctly?**

Yes. The test can be done before all the fluid is gone and it can tell us if the hearing loss is temporary or permanent. It is important to rule out permanent decreased hearing as soon as possible.

- **Is it important to retest infants with a "refer" or "did not pass" result in only one ear?**

Yes. It is important to know if babies have hearing loss in just one ear because early intervention can help them stay on track with language development.

- **How young can babies be fitted with hearing technology, if needed?**

Children younger than 1 month of age can be fitted with hearing devices and benefit from them.

If you have additional questions, or need anything else related to your baby's hearing, please contact your local public health agency or the Minnesota Department of Health EHDI program.