

Can Your Baby Hear You?



Information for Parents

New York State Department of Health

Can Your Baby Hear You?

All babies born
in a New York State
hospital will have
their hearing checked.

Hearing is very important. Your baby needs to hear sounds to learn how to talk and learn about the world. Hearing is very important in the early months to prevent possible problems with language or schoolwork later on.

A screening is a quick check to see if your baby hears. Either:

- Your baby's hearing may be screened before you leave the hospital, or,
- You will be told how to have your baby's hearing screened close to your home.

If your baby is not born in a hospital, you should ask your doctor or clinic how to have your baby's hearing checked.

Every baby's hearing should be checked as soon after birth as possible. If your baby has a hearing loss, the sooner you know it, the better. Out of 1,000 babies, about two to four will have a serious hearing loss.



What Causes Hearing Loss?

Sometimes we don't know what causes hearing loss in a baby. And sometimes it is caused by:

- Deafness that runs in families
- Ear infections
- Meningitis
- Other serious infections

Talk to your baby's doctor or clinic if you have any questions or concerns.

How Your Baby's Hearing Will Be Checked

A trained person will check your baby's hearing. The screening takes only a short time. It is okay if your baby is asleep while this is done. To screen your baby, either:

- A tiny microphone may be placed in your baby's ear, or,
- Your baby may wear special earphones and have tiny pads placed on his or her head.

Then, soft sounds will be played and your baby's hearing will be measured.

You will be given a brochure telling you what your baby's screening results mean. Your baby may need a second screening to be sure he or she hears. Your baby's movements, noise in the room, or fluid in the ear after birth may lead to false results. If your baby needs to be checked again, you will be told how to have this done.





Check Your Child's Hearing and Speech

Most babies will “pass” the hearing screening. This means that your baby is hearing **now**. Even if your baby “passes” the screening, it is still important to check your baby’s hearing often. The following checklist will help you keep track of your baby’s hearing as he or she grows. Good hearing helps babies do the things on this checklist. If you have any concerns about your child’s hearing, at any age, call your baby’s doctor or clinic.

GOOD HEARING CHECKLIST*

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Birth to 3 Months | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Becomes quiet when around everyday voices or sounds• Reacts to loud sounds: baby startles, blinks, stops sucking, cries, or wakes up• Makes soft sounds when awake: baby gurgles |
| 3 to 6 Months | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Turns eyes or head toward sounds: voices, toys that make noise, a barking dog• Starts to make speech-like sounds: "ga," "ooh," "ba," and p, b, m sounds• Reacts to a change in your tone of voice |
| 6 to 9 Months | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Responds to soft sounds, especially talking• Responds to own name and looks when called• Understands simple words: "no," "bye-bye," "juice"• Babbles: "da da da," "ma ma ma," "ba ba ba" |
| 9 to 12 Months | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consistently responds to both soft and loud sounds• Repeats single words and copies animal sounds• Points to favorite toys or foods when asked |
| 12 to 18 Months | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uses 10 or more words• Follows simple spoken directions: "get the ball"• Points to people, body parts or toys when asked• "Bounces" to music |
| 18 to 24 Months | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uses 20 or more words• Combines two or more words: "more juice," "what's that?"• Uses many different consonant sounds at the beginning of words: b, g, m• Listens to simple stories and songs |
| 2 to 3 Years | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uses sentences with two or three words• At 2 years, the child's speech is understood some of the time (25%-50%)• At 3 years, the child's speech is understood most of the time (50%-75%)• Follows two-step instructions: "get the ball and put it in the box" |

Your child's hearing can and should be checked at any age.

* Adapted from the California Department of Health Services' checklist.



More Help For Your Baby

If your baby has a hearing loss, or may have a hearing loss, you might need more help. Infants, toddlers with special needs, and their families may get help from the New York State Health Department's Early Intervention Program (EIP). EIP offers hearing screening and testing, and support for you, your baby, and your family. To learn more, call your doctor, clinic, or the EIP in your county or borough.

To learn more about newborn hearing screening or EIP, please call (518) 473-7016.

Visit the Early Intervention Program Web page at:
www.health.ny.gov/community/infants_children/early_intervention/

**To reach your local EIP, call:
Growing Up Healthy
24-Hour Hotline
1-800-522-5006
TTY: 1-800-655-1789**

In New York City, call: 311

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