

Can your baby hear your voice???

A quick hearing screening test can tell.



Just as your baby has had blood tests to screen for problems which could affect his/her health, a hearing screening will help ensure that your baby can hear to learn speech, language and reading. Hearing loss the most common abnormalities present at birth.

Who should be screened? All newborns.

But no one in my family has hearing loss? Only approximately 50% of hearing loss is traceable to risk factors such as family history of hearing loss. All newborns should be screened.

Why can't I wait to have my baby tested? The recommendation in Washington State is to have newborns screened at birth. If a concern is discovered by screening, then the baby should be diagnostically tested by 3 months. If there is a hearing loss, the baby should be in an intervention program by 6 months. This early intervention is critical for speech/ language development.

How will my baby's hearing be screened? A trained hearing screener will screen your baby's hearing using otoacoustic emissions or averaged brainstem responses. (Please review the picture from Interacoustics above.) A soft probe will be gently inserted in your baby's outer ear canal and a series of sounds will be played, received and analyzed.

Will it hurt? The screen does not cause the baby discomfort; in fact your baby can be screened while sleeping.

When do I get the results? You will get the results right after the screening.

What does the screen show? If your child passes the screening they are unlikely to have a hearing problem. But some children develop delayed onset hearing loss so should you have concerns about your child's hearing be sure to ask their pediatrician.

What if my baby fails the screen? If your baby does not pass the hearing screening then we will ask you to return for a repeat screening in 2 weeks.

What if my baby fails the repeat screening? When a baby fails any screening test it indicates additional testing should be completed. If your baby fails the hearing screening test and the repeat screening then your baby will be referred to an audiologist (a professional who specializes in evaluation, treatment, protection and preservation of the hearing and balance systems) for diagnostic hearing testing.

What if my baby has a hearing loss? If hearing loss is determined by the diagnostic testing then you and your audiologist and a physician specializing in hearing will discuss the treatment options for your baby and develop an intervention plan.

If you have questions please ask your health care professional or call the Washington State Department of Health for a referral at 206-418-5613.