

What if my baby Passes?

If your baby does not have risk factors for hearing loss and has passed the newborn screen test, then your baby's doctor will continue to assess your baby's hearing and speech/language development along with other milestones at each of your baby's regular visits.

What if my baby does NOT Pass the hearing screen?

If your baby does not pass the hearing screen at birth, it does not necessarily mean that your baby has hearing loss. But to be sure, it is extremely important to have further testing. This should include a more thorough hearing evaluation and a medical evaluation. These tests should be done as soon as possible, but definitely before your baby is 3 months old. These tests can confirm whether hearing is normal or not.

What if my baby did not receive a hearing screen as a newborn?

If your baby did not receive a hearing screen, call your baby's doctor and ask to have your baby screened. Hearing can be screened at any age. Talk with your baby's doctor if you have any concerns at any time about your baby's hearing or speech development.

If hearing loss is found, what can be done?

This depends on the type and severity of the hearing loss. Every baby with hearing loss should be seen by an Audiologist (hearing specialist), Ear nose and throat doctor, and an eye doctor all experienced in testing babies. If hearing loss is permanent, hearing aids, and speech language services may be recommended for your baby. You will be informed of choices for communicating.

Kansas Department of Health
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Newborn Hearing and Your Baby

*Finding hearing loss early can
make a big difference in your
baby's life*

Newborn Hearing Screening and Your Baby

Before you bring your newborn home from the hospital, your baby needs to have a hearing screening.

Although most babies can hear normally, 2-3 of every 1,000 babies are born with some degree of hearing loss. Without newborn hearing screening, it is difficult to detect hearing loss in the first months and years of your baby's life. About half of all children with hearing loss have no risk factors for it.

Newborn hearing screening can detect possible hearing loss in the first days of a baby's life. If a possible hearing loss is found, further tests will be done to confirm the results. When hearing loss is confirmed, treatment, and early intervention should start as soon as possible. *Early Intervention* refers to programs and services available to babies and their families that help with hearing loss and learning important communication skills.

Finding out your baby has hearing loss at an early age, provides the best opportunity to assist your child's speech and language development. This is important for your child's future learning, social, and emotional well-being.

Why do newborns need hearing screening?

Babies learn from the time they are born. One of the ways to learn is through hearing. If they have problems with hearing and do not receive the right treatment and early intervention services, babies will have trouble with language development.

For some babies, early intervention services may include the use of sign language and/or hearing aids. Studies have shown that infants with hearing loss who receive appropriate early intervention services by age 6 months usually develop good language and learning skills.

Some parents think that they would be able to tell if their baby could not hear. This is not always the case. Babies may respond to noise by startling or turning their heads toward the sound. This does not mean they have normal hearing. Most babies with hearing loss can hear some sounds but still not enough to develop full speaking ability.

Timing is everything. Your baby will have the best chance for normal language development if any hearing loss is discovered and treatment begins by the age of 6 months—and the earlier the better.

Will my hospital automatically screen my newborn's hearing?

Most hospitals do hearing screenings for all newborns. Most states now have Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) programs. These programs try to ensure that all newborns in the state are screened for hearing loss by one month of age, if needed receive a diagnostic evaluation by three months and if diagnosed with hearing loss receive early intervention services by six months of age.

How is newborn hearing screening done?

- **Automated Auditory Brainstem Response (AABR)** – This test measures how the hearing nerve responds to sound. Clicks or tones are played through soft earphones into the baby's ears. The electrodes placed on the baby's head measure the hearing nerve response.
- **Otoacoustic Emission (OAE)** – This test measures sound waves produced in the inner ear. A tiny probe is placed just inside the baby's ear canal. It measures the response (echo) when the clicks or tones are played into the baby's ears.

Both tests are quick (5-10 minutes), painless, and may be done while your baby is sleeping or lying still.