

Newborn Hearing Screening Programme



Why Is It Important to Do A Hearing Screening For My Baby?

Unless detected and intervened early, hearing loss at birth can seriously affect a baby's speech and language development. About one in every 1,000 newborn babies suffer from serious hearing problems. As early detection of hearing loss is very important, our newborn hearing screening programme aims to detect hearing loss at birth to enable timely intervention.

The critical phase for the development of higher centres in the brain responsible for speech is the first three years of life. If this crucial period is missed, it may be difficult, if not impossible, for many of the hearing-impaired children to acquire the basic language, social and cognitive skills that provide the foundation for later schooling and success in society.

It has been recommended that all infants with hearing loss be identified within three months and receive intervention by six months of age.

When Should The Hearing Test Be Done?

The hearing screening should be done as early as possible after birth.

We screen newborn babies between six to 18 hours after birth and the screening is done in the postnatal ward before mother and baby are discharged.

How Will My Baby's Hearing Be Screened?

Screening will be performed by trained staff and will take about 15 minutes. However, the screening time will depend on how quietly your baby is resting.

We use the Automated Auditory Brainstem Response (AABR) test for the screening.

This is a painless and non-invasive technique. Most sleeping babies will continue to sleep during this test.

We will notify you and your paediatrician on your baby's screening result. Your paediatrician will advise you if any further tests are required. The result of the screening will be recorded in the new Baby Health Booklet.

What is Automated Auditory Brainstem Response (AABR)?

We use a device called the ALGO screener. The ALGO screener uses Automated Auditory Brainstem Response (AABR) technology. The screener sends soft clicking sounds to your baby's ears through earphones. Sensors, which resemble stickers, pick up the response from your baby's brain and send it to the ALGO device, where it is analysed automatically. The ALGO device then gives an automatic PASS or REFER result.

For more information,
please call our hotline at +65.6235.3269

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The IPAC Hotline +65.6735.5000 is a free service that connects patients in real time to relevant medical services and doctors across ParkwayHealth's Hospitals.

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The test is safe, completely painless, and can be easily carried out when your baby is quiet, especially after a feed or while asleep.

What Does It Mean If My Baby Obtains A "Pass"?

A "Pass" means that your baby's hearing function is normal at the time of testing. However, in some babies, hearing loss may develop gradually with recurrent ear infections, serious infections or chronic illnesses. Hence, even if your baby passes the test, you need to be vigilant and continue to monitor the behavioural responses of your child's hearing ability according to the checklist provided in the new Baby Health Booklet. The checklist includes the types of behaviour at different ages that will be useful for the detection of hearing loss.

If your baby's progress does not match the milestones listed in the Health Booklet, and if you suspect there is a problem, please consult your paediatrician immediately.

What If My Baby Obtains A "Refer"?

If your baby needs a repeat screen, the repeat AABR will be performed as far apart as possible, nearer your discharge time.

If a "Refer" result is obtained again, this may be indicative of problems that require further evaluation. Your paediatrician will be notified about the screening result and he/she may refer your child for further tests.

Follow-up screening is done on an outpatient basis when the baby is between two to four weeks old. If necessary, an early referral to an ENT (Ear, Nose and Throat) specialist will be recommended.

Charges

A one-time fee will be levied for test performed on both inpatient and outpatient basis. For a re-test as an outpatient, the charge is 50% of the normal inpatient rate.

