

Newborn Hearing Screening...

For Out-of-Hospital Births



What is newborn hearing screening?

Newborn hearing screening checks babies for hearing loss in the range where speech is heard.

Every year, about 1 in 300 babies in Minnesota is born with a hearing loss that can be found by newborn hearing screening.

Why is newborn hearing screening important?

Speech and language start to develop at birth. A child with hearing loss may have difficulty with speech and language development without early help. If a baby has hearing loss, it is usually not noticeable to parents or providers because some babies with hearing loss may startle to loud sounds and even appear to listen. Screening with follow-up testing is the **only** way to find hearing loss early. Learning that your baby has hearing loss at an early age will help you and your child develop lifelong communication and language skills.

When should my baby's hearing be screened?

Screening should be done as soon as possible and is best completed before your baby is one month old.

How will my baby's hearing be screened?

Unlike the hearing tests done with older children and adults, newborn hearing screening does not require your baby to raise their hand in response to test sounds. Rather, newborn hearing screening measures your baby's internal response to test sounds.

While your baby is calm, newborn hearing screening will be performed. The two methods currently in use for newborn hearing screening are Otoacoustic Emissions (OAE) and Automated Auditory Brainstem Response (AABR). Both are acceptable for screening babies.





What are OAEs and AABRs?

With OAEs, a soft rubber tip placed in each ear delivers soft tones and measures an echo that occurs when the ear is functioning normally. With AABRs, earphones deliver the test sounds. Sensors placed on the baby's head and neck measure the baby's internal response to those sounds. For both OAEs and AABRs, a computer measures whether the result is a PASS or a REFER (not pass).

What do the results mean?

If your baby receives a PASS result, the screening indicates that your baby's hearing is normal at that time. Because hearing loss can occur at any time during a person's life, concerns for hearing loss or missed speech milestones should be brought to a provider's attention.

If your baby receives a REFER result, the screening indicates that further testing is needed to make sure your baby is hearing all the sounds important for speech and language development. Your provider will help you arrange an appointment for follow-up as soon as possible.

Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Program

The Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) Program assists in identifying newborns and infants who have or are at risk of having hearing loss and guides families to appropriate intervention services.

The goals of the EHDI program are for all babies to have:

- hearing screened by 1 month of age
- diagnostic evaluation by 3 months of age
- early intervention services by 6 months of age



Identifying babies with hearing loss early and offering education, family support, and intervention can make a big difference.

Minnesota's EHDI program website provides resources for parents, providers, and other professionals. Parents of children will learn about the EHDI process, find materials that will guide them through identification and intervention, and find hearing specialists and education resources in their area. In addition, the site contains information to link parents with family and community resources locally available.

Minnesota's EHDI Website:

www.improveehdi.org/mn