

Frequently Asked Questions

Why screen my baby's hearing?

Hearing loss is one of the most common conditions present at birth. It is easy to miss hearing loss because you usually can't see anything different. Without screening, hearing loss is often not detected until the baby is 2 years old and not talking. Early identification and intervention means that your baby won't fall behind other children in speech and language development.

How do you check my baby's hearing?

OAE: Soft sounds are made into the baby's ear. If the ear is working normally, it will send back sounds that the computer can pick up and analyze. Your baby doesn't have to do anything other than be quiet.

ABR: Soft sounds are made into the baby's ear and electrodes or little sensors pick up the brain's response to the sounds.

What does Pass or Refer mean?

Pass means that your baby's ears are working normally today. However, some babies develop hearing loss later so if you are concerned, you should always talk to your baby's medical provider about getting a hearing test.

Refer means that your baby did not pass the hearing screening and needs additional testing.

What happens if my baby Refers?

If your baby refers a second time, it is very important that you make an appointment with a pediatric audiologist as soon as possible to have a complete hearing test called an Auditory Brainstem Response test or an ABR.

How long does the hearing screen take?

Usually it takes 10 to 15 minutes depending on how quiet your baby is during the screening.

Will hearing screening hurt my baby?

No. Most babies sleep through the screen.

Where is the hearing screening done?

Your baby's hearing can be screened at this hospital, as part of the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Program.

What can be done if hearing loss is detected?

Hearing loss cannot be determined by screening. Screening tells us if further testing by a pediatric audiologist is needed. If an audiologist finds that your baby has a hearing loss he or she will talk with you about what happens next.

What if I choose not to allow the hearing screen?

You will be asked to sign a refusal form and your baby's doctor will be advised of your decision. We recommend that you think about the screening. Please ask questions about your concerns. Finding a hearing loss as early as possible is critical in order for children to develop normal speech and language.

**If you have any other questions, please call
Rhode Island Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Program at 401-277-3700**