

Patient/Parent Education Newborn Hearing

Dear Parent:

Your baby will have a newborn hearing screening done prior to dismissal from the hospital. This is required for all newborns. Your baby's hearing is important for developing normal speech and language skills.

Important Hearing Facts

- † It is important that your baby can hear you.
- † Hearing and learning language are connected to talking and understanding you.
- † An infant's hearing loss is often overlooked
- † An infant's hearing can be checked as soon as one day after birth.
- † Hearing loss occurs more often when a baby:
 - has had bacterial meningitis.
 - has had newborn risk factors associated with hearing loss.
 - has had a head injury.
 - has a syndrome or disorder that is associated with known hearing loss (e.g., Usher syndrome or a neurodegenerative disorder)
 - has needed to take medicines that are known to be harmful to the ears
 - has had a childhood disease known to be associated with hearing loss (e.g., measles).
- † Parents are frequently the first to be concerned about their baby's hearing.
- † Even a very mild hearing loss can affect language development

Screening Your Baby's Hearing

- † Your baby should be very quiet and /or asleep during the test. The best time to perform the test is after your baby has eaten or during a sleep period.
- † Quiet surroundings will increase the accuracy of the test.
- † Our equipment uses the Automated Brainstem Response technology.
- † The screening device sends off 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 screening device. The response is analyzed automatically.
- † The screening device then indicates a PASS or REFER result.
- † The screening takes 4-7 minutes provided that your baby is quiet.

What does PASS or REFER mean?

- † A PASS result indicates that your baby hears at levels required for normal speech and language development at the time of the screening.
- † A REFER result indicates that your baby needs additional screening or testing.

Possible Reasons Your Baby May Not Have Passed the Hearing Screening

- † Your baby may have some fluid in the ear canal following the birthing process.
- † Your baby may have some debris, such as vernix or dried blood, in the ear canal.
- † Your baby may have been too active or noisy during the screening.
- † The environment may have been too noisy during the screening.

- † Your baby may have a hearing loss.

After the Hearing Screening

- † The results of your baby's screening will be placed on the permanent hospital record.
- † You will be informed of the results of the screening.
- † If your baby received a REFER result, arrangements will be made for your baby to have further screening.
- † The results will be sent to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment "Sound Beginnings".

NOTE: You have the option of not having your baby's hearing tested. You will need to sign a waiver to request this test not be done on your baby.

Signs of hearing that you should notice as your baby grows.

- † By 4 months of age
 - Startles or jumps at sudden loud sounds.
 - Stirs or awakens from sleep when someone speaks or a noise is made nearby.
 - Calms down when you speak or when a sudden new sound occurs.
 - Tries to turn toward a sound.

- † By 8 months of age
 - Turns toward a new sound or when name is called
 - Listens to a soft musical toy.
 - Makes several different babbling sounds.
 - "Answers" your talking by making sounds.
 - Uses voice (not crying) to get your attention.
 - Becomes frightened by an angry voice.

- † By 12 months of age
 - Responds by stopping or looking sad to "no-no!"
 - Reacts when name is called.
 - Turns head toward side where sound is coming from.
 - Tries to imitate you, using changes in loudness, rhythm, and pitch.
 - Makes different consonant sounds when "talking."
 - Points to or looks at familiar objects or people when asked to.
 - "Dances" and makes sounds to music.

- † From 12 - 15 months of age
 - First true words appear.

Remember, today's evaluation is just a screening, not a diagnostic test.

If you have any further questions, please ask your physician.