

Screening Newborns

Read this page to find out what newborn hearing screening is, and why hospitals do it.

What is newborn hearing screening?

Newborn hearing screening is testing a baby right after he's born for hearing loss.

Different hospitals use different tests. These tests are done while your baby sleeps. These are the most common tests:

- [ABR \(Auditory Brainstem Response\)](#)
- [EOAE \(Evoked Otoacoustic Emissions\)](#)

Why hospitals do it

- Every day, 33 babies in this country are born with [sensorineural hearing loss](#).
 - **Sensorineural hearing loss** is caused by problems in the nerves or the pathways to the brain.
 - You can't see this kind of hearing loss. Your baby's outer and middle ears may be normal.
- The younger your child is when you find the hearing loss, the earlier you can get help.
 - It's best to get help before your child is 6 months old. Getting help early can help your child learn language normally.
- Today, many states have laws saying that hospitals must screen newborns.



What happens after your baby is screened

1. You get the results of the test back. The results are "**pass**" or "**refer**".
 - "**Pass**" means that your child seems to have normal hearing.
 - "**Refer**" means that your baby needs more hearing tests.
2. If your baby gets a "refer" result, the hospital will send you to an [audiologist](#).
 - The audiologist will test your child to see if he really has a hearing loss.
 - She will test your child to see what he can and can't hear.
 - Many babies who get a "refer" result turn out to have normal hearing.
3. If your baby has a real hearing loss, he may get [hearing aids](#). He may also join an [early intervention](#) program.
 - Hearing aids help your baby take in as much sound as possible.
 - Early intervention can help you learn more about your baby's hearing.
 - These programs teach you how to communicate with your baby.
4. If your baby doesn't have a hearing loss now, watch out for signs of hearing loss later.
 - Newborn hearing screening doesn't catch all babies with hearing loss.
 - Your child could get a hearing loss after he's been tested.
 - If you don't see the signs early on, your child could go months or years without help.

Helpful Video

This video is called 'Sound Beginnings':

- It will tell you more about newborn hearing screening.
- It talks about the different ways your baby's hearing can be tested.
- You need Windows Media Player to play this video. [Go here to get Window's Media Player](#) if you don't have it.

Click on the connection speed you use to view the video:

- [Sound Beginnings Video - 56K/Phone Modem](#)
- [Sound Beginnings Video - 256k/DSL or Cable](#)
- [Sound Beginnings Video - 1048k/T1 or T2](#)

The video above was provided by The National Center for Hearing Assessment and Management (NCHAM). It can be purchased on VHS tape for \$15.00 or downloaded for free at www.infanthearing.org. The video is also available in Spanish on their website.

Helpful Links

- Read babyhearing.org for more information about newborn hearing screening.
- Check out the [Early Hearing Detection and Intervention \(EHDI\) program](#) for more information.
- Go to infanthearing.org to see if hospitals are doing newborn screening for hearing loss in your state.