

FAQs

Newborn Hearing Screening Follow Up

Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI)

www.hearing.in.gov (317) 232-0972



The hospital said my baby “referred” on the newborn hearing screening, what does “refer” mean?

Refer means that your baby did NOT pass the newborn hearing screen. It does not mean your child definitely has a hearing loss but it does mean that additional testing is critical to determine what your baby's hearing status is. **The follow up hearing test should be completed by 3 months of age or sedation may be required to complete the test.** The hospital should have referred you directly to an audiologist in your area who is equipped and experienced in testing the hearing of babies. There is a list of audiologists in the state who can provide hearing tests on babies on our website www.hearing.in.gov (list is labeled “Comprehensive and Limited Audiology Provider Facilities”)



What is an audiologist?

An audiologist is a licensed health care provider (with a doctorate or master's degree) who has the education, training and specialized equipment to test and diagnose hearing loss and make necessary recommendations for follow up.

Not every audiologist is equipped and experienced to provide hearing tests on infants.

Please find a list of audiology providers throughout the state of Indiana who can complete audiology testing on babies and children on our website at www.hearing.in.gov. The list of audiologists is listed under FAMILY RESOURCES” and is labeled “Comprehensive and Limited Audiology Provider Facilities”.

My baby reacts to loud sounds, does he/she still need testing?

Hearing isn't “all or none”. There are different levels of hearing loss. Even if your baby can hear loud sounds or your voice when you are close, he/she may not be able to hear soft or medium level sounds or speech. Sounds in our speech have different loudness levels. A child with hearing loss may only hear parts of words (i.e. they may only hear “a” in a word like “sat”). An audiology exam (hearing test) should be completed by the time your baby is three months of age.



Is hearing loss and deafness common?

Hearing loss is one of the most common conditions that can be identified at birth and is present in 1-3 babies per thousand. There are also risk factors that put a child at risk for developing hearing loss later in childhood. 90% of children who are born as deaf or hard of hearing are born into families where no one else is deaf or hard of hearing, so it is important to have your baby tested even if there is no family history.



My baby can't talk yet, so there isn't a rush to see if he has hearing loss. Can we just test again later if we notice anything?

Even though children don't start using their first words until closer to 12 months, they do LISTEN from the moment they are born. These early months of listening are critical for development of brain function and development of speech and language skills. For example, they may hear you say "mama", "dada" or "bye-bye" hundreds of times before they actually say it. Hearing words over and over again is how they learn to say them. The earlier the hearing loss is found in an infant, the earlier he/she can start receiving services to improve speech, language and learning.



I don't have insurance. How will I pay for the hearing test? How much does it cost?

Medicaid and most private health insurance plans cover the costs of the hearing test and any resulting testing until the infant is 24 months of age. You should confirm the cost of the evaluation with the provider when you schedule. There are also some locations in Indiana who provide testing at no charge or on a sliding scale. There is a list of audiology providers in Indiana who can test babies after newborn hearing screening listed on our website at www.hearing.in.gov.

Will the test still be accurate if my baby has fluid in his/her ears?

Yes, the test can still be completed. Special testing will determine if the hearing loss is from the fluid or if there is a permanent hearing loss. Your baby may need repeat testing to determine his/her hearing after fluid is resolved and also to make sure the fluid is gone.

If my baby passed in one ear, does he/she still need testing?

Absolutely! Hearing loss in one ear does impact speech, language and learning. This becomes even more apparent in groups or noisy situations. It impacts a child's ability to tell what direction sounds are coming from, so knowing if a child has a loss in one ear is a safety issue as well. Also, hearing loss in one ear puts a child at risk for developing a loss in the other ear so it is important to monitor hearing levels in both ears.



The Early Hearing Detection and Intervention program (EHDI) at the Indiana State Department of Health is committed to the state and national goals of "1-3-6". EHDI is tasked with making sure that every baby born Indiana receives a hearing screening by 1 month of age, if they don't pass newborn hearing screening, receive a diagnostic audiology exam by 3 months of age, and if identified as deaf or hard of hearing, enrolled in early intervention services by 6 months of age. Our staff is able to support and help parents and health care providers throughout the process of newborn hearing screening and follow up services. Please contact one of our parent consultants for any questions regarding newborn hearing screening or follow up services.

EHDI Parent Consultants:

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