

Looking at your baby's hearing

An **easy guide** to screening tests for your new baby

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Your choice

This booklet has information about the tests that your baby can have.

The tests can find out if your baby might have a hearing problem. It is important for babies to hear well so they can learn to speak. These tests can find problems early. They may not find every problem.

If we find a problem early we can help your baby.

You can choose if you want your baby to have these tests. You can say no to any of them. If you do not want your baby to have the tests we will give you a list of checks to do as your baby grows.

If you are worried, you can talk to your midwife or doctor. They can help you decide if you want your baby to have these tests.

About these tests

We only show the results of the tests to health staff who need to see them.

It is important to tell your midwife or health visitor about any health problems you and the baby's father have, as your baby may have them too.

These tests check how well your baby is hearing. Very few babies are born with hearing problems. If we find a problem early we can help your baby with their listening and talking.

These tests will not hurt your baby.

Your baby may have the hearing tests in hospital before you go home. Or you may be asked to go to a clinic for the tests after you have gone home.

The first type of test

The first test takes a few minutes.

A soft earpiece is put in your baby's ear. It is a bit like a headphone. Soft clicking noises are played into it. A machine can check if your baby hears the sounds.

Sometimes this first test does not work well. It does not mean your baby has a hearing problem. It may be that your baby was not very relaxed. It may be that there were some other noises going on.

It may be that your baby had some fluid blocking their ear. This is very common in new babies and gets better in time.

The second type of test

1. We might need to do another test. This second test takes longer. It takes 5 to 15 minutes. The test has 3 steps.
2. We put 3 small pads on your baby's head and neck.

3. We put soft headphones on your baby's ears.
4. Soft clicking noises are played.

A baby who has needed special care for more than 2 days will have this test.

Test results

We will tell you the results straight away. Most babies will not have a hearing problem.

Sometimes hearing problems are found as your baby gets older. If you have any worries about your baby's hearing, talk to your health visitor or doctor.

If the tests show your baby might have a hearing problem we will send them to a hearing expert (audiologist). It is very important to go to these appointments.

Being sent to a hearing expert does not mean your baby has a hearing problem, it is just more likely that they do. The hearing expert will see your baby within 4 weeks. A baby who has been on special care will be seen within 8 weeks.

You will be given a red book to keep a record of your baby's health checks in. Keep the red book safe. Take it with you when you see anyone about your baby's health. There are some hearing checks in your baby's red book. It is important to do these checks as your baby grows up.

It is important to tell your midwife or health visitor if you move home.

Using your information

For us to contact you as part of the programme, we will need to handle some of your and your baby's personal information. If you need more information about this, you can:

- visit the website: publichealthwales.org/privacy;
- email: PHW.InformationGovernance@wales.nhs.uk; or
- phone: 02920 104307.

We also keep your baby's personal details to make sure that the standard of our service is as high as possible. This includes checking your baby's records if your baby is found to have a hearing loss after having a screening test which showed a normal result.

You can find out more on our website at www.newbornhearingscreening.wales.nhs.uk

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions about Newborn Hearing Screening Wales, please email us through our website or phone us on one of the numbers below.

North Wales: 01978 727005
Mid and West Wales: 01792 343364
South East Wales: 02921 843568

If you have any concerns, please write to:
The Director of Screening Services
4th Floor, Capital Quarter 2
Tyndall Street
Cardiff, CF10 4BZ

We welcome correspondence and phone calls in Welsh. We will respond to correspondence in Welsh without delay.

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