

- Move closer to your baby when you are speaking, rather than raising your voice
- Try to keep background noise as low as possible at home and move closer to your baby in noisy places
- Using a hearing aid may help if this is recommended by your audiologist

### Other information

The National Deaf Children's Society can give you more information about conductive hearing loss and glue ear. It has a helpline for parents whose children have a hearing loss. Their experienced advisors can help answer any questions you may have.

You can contact the NDCS in the following ways:

E-mail: [ndcs@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:ndcs@ndcs.org.uk)

Website: [www.ndcs.org.uk](http://www.ndcs.org.uk)

Interpreter Now: <https://interpreternow.co.uk/ndcs>

Freephone helpline: 0808 800 8880 (v/t)

(other methods of contact also available, see

<https://www.ndcs.org.uk/our-services/services-for-families/helpline/>)

Your local contact numbers are:



## Your Baby has Glue Ear

Information for parents



Version 2 7/21

## Your Baby has Glue Ear

This leaflet is for the parents of a baby who has a hearing loss due to “glue ear”.

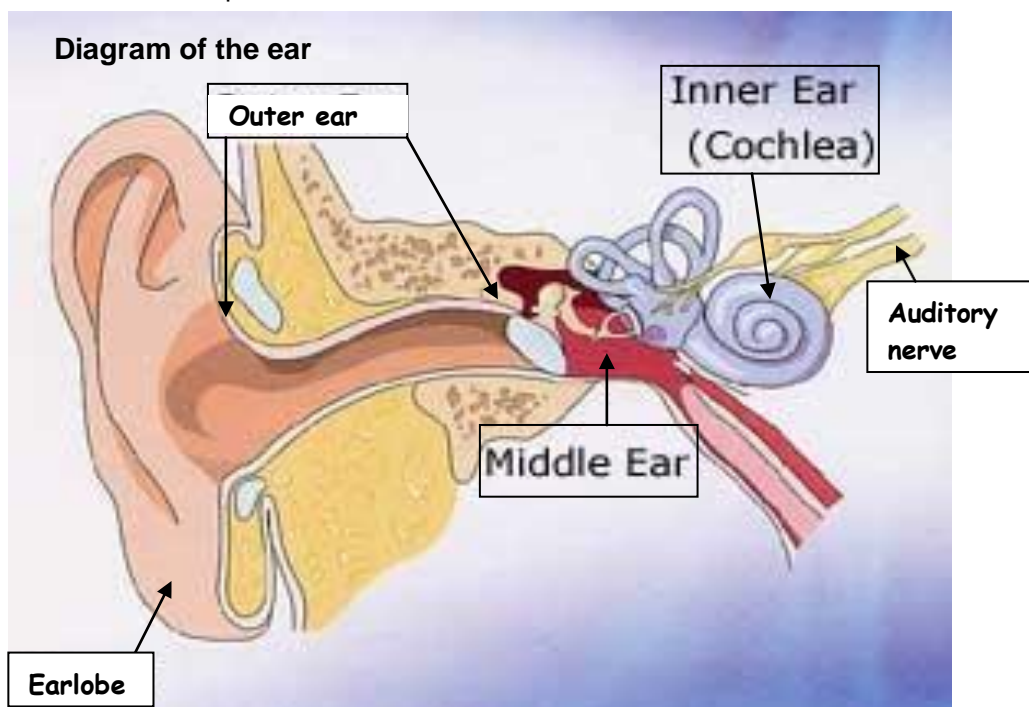
It explains:

- How the ear works
- What a glue ear means
- What your baby’s hearing tests showed
- How a hearing loss may be treated
- How a hearing loss may affect your baby

### How does the ear work?

Sound passes into the ear and is changed into signals that the brain can understand. The ear also helps us to balance.

The ear has 3 parts – the outer ear, middle ear and inner ear



### What is a “glue ear”?

A glue ear is a build up of sticky fluid in the middle ear. This stops the ear drum moving as well as it should to send the sound signals through the middle ear to the inner ear. Glue ear usually causes only a mild hearing loss. This type of hearing loss may also be called a conductive deafness. For most babies and

children the fluid will go away without needing any treatment. Hearing should get better when the fluid clears.

Babies born with a cleft palate or Down’s Syndrome are more likely to have glue ear, which is less likely to clear up by itself. They will need regular hearing checks throughout childhood.

Research shows that smoking near children makes them more likely to have ear infections and glue ear.

### What did my baby’s hearing tests show?

The audiologist will explain your baby’s test results to you. They may show that the cochlea in your baby’s inner ear is working well, but that fluid in the middle ear means that sounds have to be louder than normal to pass through to the cochlea. A test called tympanometry may show that the ear drum cannot move easily because of the fluid.

### How will my baby’s hearing loss be treated?

Most babies who are found to have a conductive hearing loss due to glue ear when they are very small will not need any treatment. Your baby will be seen for another hearing test when she or he can sit up and turn to sounds (at about 9 months). If there is a hearing loss at this time, you may be offered hearing aids for your baby to use while the glue ear is still there. However, treatment will depend on the level of hearing loss and how this seems to be affecting your baby. Hearing loss caused by glue ear can fluctuate, that is, may be worse at some times than others. Your baby’s hearing will be monitored with regular hearing checks.

As your baby grows, glue ear may clear by itself. If it does not clear and is causing problems (such as a hearing loss, speech delay or ear infections), you may be offered an operation for your child. The fluid is removed from the middle ear and a tiny plastic tube (called a grommet) is put in the ear drum. This keeps air in the middle ear and stops the fluid building up again.

Some parents prefer their children to use hearing aids to manage the hearing loss, rather than have an operation.

### How will a hearing loss affect my baby?

As most hearing loss of this type is mild and only lasts for a short time, it does not usually cause any long term problems or difficulties. Your baby will be close to you during the early months so will be able to hear your voice and see your face. A hearing loss can affect speech development and behaviour but if the hearing loss is treated or gets better, this should not last.

Here are some tips to help your baby hear more clearly:

- Make sure you have your baby’s attention and eye contact before speaking