

### What is the cause of a mild hearing loss?

A permanent mild hearing loss may be inherited, even if no-one else in the family has a hearing loss. It may be caused by infections during pregnancy, premature birth and complications at birth. It may be part of another condition or linked to other difficulties. Hearing loss can also develop through childhood illnesses, such as mumps, measles or meningitis.

You can discuss how to find the cause of your baby's hearing loss with the specialist doctor who works with your audiologist. For some babies and children, it may not be possible to find the cause of their hearing loss.

### What other support is available for my baby?

It is not easy to tell when a young baby has a hearing loss, especially when it is mild. Your audiologist and specialist doctor will support you and your family. You may also meet the specialist teacher who can offer advice on how best to communicate with your baby.

The National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) can give you support and information, and 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 a Mild Hearing Loss

Information for parents

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## Your Baby has a Mild Hearing Loss

This leaflet is for the parents of a baby who has a mild hearing loss.

It explains:

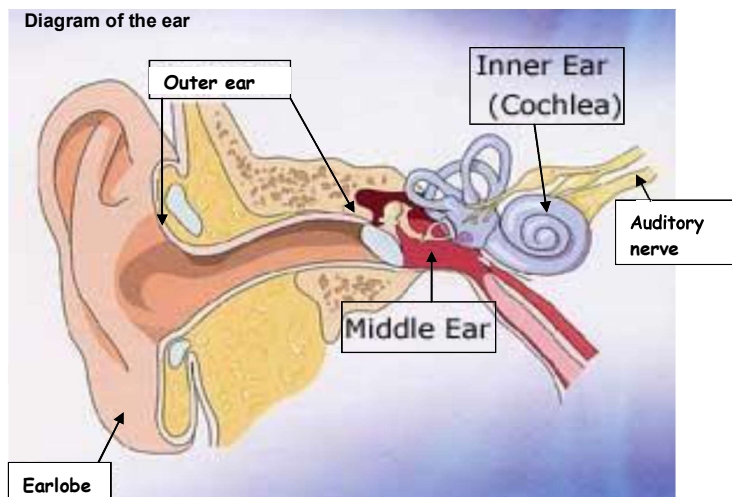
- How the ear works
- What a mild hearing loss means
- How it may be helped
- What causes a mild hearing loss
- What other support is available

### 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.

Diagram of the ear



### What is a mild hearing loss?

There are different levels of hearing loss. These can be described as mild, moderate, severe and profound. A mild hearing loss means that your baby needs sounds to be a little louder than normal. This means that your baby can hear a lot, but may not be able to hear very quiet sounds. Your baby may have

more difficulty hearing your voice if there is background noise or if you are more than a few feet away. A mild deafness can make it more difficult to work out which direction a sound is coming from. Sometimes a mild deafness may cause a delay in speech development.

Your audiologist will be able to explain which sounds your baby can hear and which sounds they have difficulty hearing.

There are different types of hearing loss. The type of hearing loss your baby has depends on where the problem is in the ear.

Sensorineural hearing loss (sometimes called nerve deafness) is a permanent hearing loss. This usually means that there is a problem in the part of the inner ear called the cochlea.

Conductive hearing loss means that sound cannot easily pass through the outer and middle ear to the inner ear. Conductive hearing loss is usually temporary, but in a very small number of babies the hearing loss may be permanent.

Children with sensorineural hearing loss can also have a temporary conductive hearing loss.

### How can a mild hearing loss be helped?

Your audiologist may tell you that wearing hearing aids will help your baby to hear better. However, if your baby is very young when the hearing loss is found, it is unlikely that hearing aids will be considered before your baby has a hearing test at about 9 months of age.

Your baby will be close to you during the early months so will be able to hear your voice and see your face. When your baby can sit up and turn well to sounds, a hearing test should give more information about the hearing loss. This will help you and the audiologist decide if hearing aids are likely to help your baby.

Your baby will be seen regularly for hearing tests to check for any change in your baby's hearing levels. If you have any concern between appointments, ask your audiologist for an earlier test.

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

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