

Recommended Follow-Up to the Newborn Hearing Screen for babies

Community Paediatric Audiology Service



Every baby is offered a Newborn Hearing Screen at birth and some babies require a follow-up hearing test after passing the screen. In Cambridge, South & East Cambs this is done when the baby is around 9 months of age (after allowing for prematurity) by the Cambridge Community Paediatric Audiology Service.

Why is it important to check your baby's hearing?

Approximately one to two babies in every 1,000 born will have a hearing loss in one or both ears. A further one in every 1,000 children can develop or acquire a hearing loss later in childhood.

Early identification of hearing loss is known to be important for the development of the child and means that support and information can be provided for the parents at an early stage.

In addition, there are no other routine hearing checks in Cambridge, South & East Cambs for children, so this is a good opportunity to check your baby's hearing.

Who is referred for a follow up hearing test?

Babies might be referred for a follow-up hearing test because:

- There is family history of permanent hearing loss in a parent or sibling
- They needed a significant level of support while in special care when they were born
- They have a condition associated with increased risk of hearing loss e.g. Down's Syndrome or congenital infection.
- They missed/did not complete the hearing screen at birth.

How to arrange an appointment?

The Newborn Hearing Screeners refer babies requiring a follow-up hearing test to Community Paediatric Audiology. When your baby is around 6 months of age we will write to you asking for you to contact us to arrange an appointment to test your baby's hearing when he/she is 9 months. We can then arrange an appointment in whichever one of the Community Paediatric Audiology clinics is most convenient; Arbury, Fulbourn, Ely or Sawston.

What happens at the appointment?

The appointment lasts 30 minutes during which we will ask some questions about your baby's general development, look in his/her ears and perform a hearing test. This is a different type of test from the one they had at birth.

The hearing test used to assess babies at 9 months is called Visual Reinforcement Audiometry (VRA). The baby must be awake, alert and settled. The child is encouraged to turn towards an animated toy every time a sound is heard.

This allows us to determine if hearing is within normal limits at specific frequencies (pitches). It will confirm whether or not hearing is sufficient for speech and language development. We will be able to tell you the results of the hearing test at the end of the appointment.

Hearing checklist

In your baby's Personal Child Health Record (Red Book) there are two lists entitled, 'Reaction to sounds checklist' and 'Making Sounds Checklist'. These give pointers about what to look and listen out for as your baby grows, to check if she/he can hear. If you have any concerns about your child's hearing at any age, do contact your GP or Health Visitor.

If you have any questions regarding the recommended follow-up to the Newborn Hearing Screen you can contact our office.

For further information about this service contact:

Community Paediatric Audiology Service
The Peacock Centre
Brookfield's Campus
351 Mill Road
Cambridge CB1 3DF

Tel: 01223 218066

If you require this information in a different format such as in large print or on audio tape, or in a different language please contact the service on the details above.

If you have any compliments about this service or suggestions for improvements, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service on 0300 131 1000 (charges may apply depending on your network) or email: ccs-tr.pals@nhs.net.

For free, confidential health advice and information 24 hours a day, 365 days a year please contact NHS 111.