

# Newborn Hearing Screening

## What is Newborn Hearing Screening?

- It is a quick test to check if your baby hears well or if he/she has a possible hearing loss.
- It is usually performed in the nursery before being discharged from the hospital.



## Why is it Important?

- About 2-3 per 1,000 babies are born with some degree of hearing loss.
- Early detection of hearing loss is important in order to provide early intervention, ensure the child has access to sounds as soon as possible, and help him/her benefit from his/her auditory skills to the maximum extent.
- Babies whose hearing loss is not identified and treated early usually experience delays and/or disorders in their speech and language skills.

- The goal is for hearing to be screened by the age of one month, hearing loss diagnosed by the age of three months, and intervention initiated by the age of six months if possible.
- This recommendation is based on studies that have shown that babies with hearing loss who receive appropriate intervention by the age of 6 months have a better chance of developing age-appropriate speech and language skills by the time they enter kindergarten.



## How is the Test Done?

- **Hearing is screened using:**
  - Otoacoustic emissions (OAE) which assesses the sensory cells in the cochlea/inner ear.
  - Auditory brainstem response (ABR) which assesses the hearing nerve.

- In some cases, babies are screened using both tests.
- Small earphones are placed in your baby's ears and special sensors may be placed on his/her head. Soft sounds are played in the ear and the response is measured automatically.
- Both tests are safe, painless, and can be done in 15-20 minutes. They are best done if your baby is sleeping or lying calmly.

### **My Baby Passed the Hearing Screening. What Does that Mean?**

- If your baby passes in both ears, he/she may not need a follow up appointment
- However, some babies who pass the hearing screening may develop a hearing loss later.

This could be due to risk factors that may cause progressive or late-onset hearing loss, such as:

**Family history of childhood sensorineural hearing loss.**

**Excessively high levels of bilirubin in the blood (jaundice).**

**Maternal infections during pregnancy (e.g. Toxoplasmosis, Rubella, Cytomegalovirus, Herpes, or Syphilis).**

**Prematurity or very low birth weight (less than 1500 grams).**

**Lack of Oxygen at birth.**

**Meningitis.**

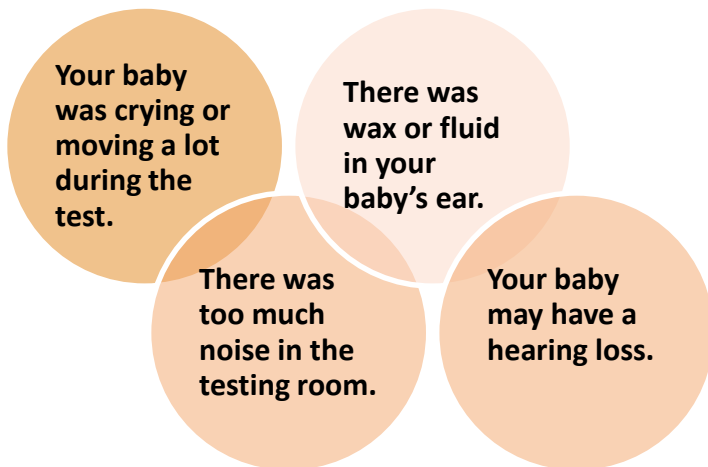
**Syndromes associated with hearing loss (e.g. Usher, Alport, Crouzon).**

- You will probably be advised at the time of screening that your baby's hearing needs to be checked again if there are any risk factors.
- This does not mean that your baby will develop hearing loss in the future, but that it is best that

your baby's hearing is monitored, so that early intervention/treatment can be provided as needed.

## **My Baby Did Not Pass the Hearing Screening. What Does that Mean?**

- Not all babies pass the hearing screening the first time. If your baby does not pass in one or both ears, this may be because:



- Your baby's hearing will be screened a second time, either before leaving the hospital or as an out-patient appointment.
- If your baby does not pass the second screening, you will be referred to an audiologist who will perform more tests and give further advice.

### **What Happens in the Diagnostic Testing Appointment?**

- The audiologist will perform a range of diagnostic tests to thoroughly check your baby's hearing.
- Some of the diagnostic tests will be similar to the screening tests, but will take longer time (i.e. up to 3-4 hours). You will be in advance whether your baby needs to be awake or asleep during the appointment (depending on the type of tests).



- The audiologist will discuss the results with you and tell you...



- The audiologist will talk to you about the available treatment options and help you plan what do to next to get the care/management that your baby needs.

**Remember that your baby's hearing is very important. Pay attention to how well your baby responds to sounds and continue to monitor his/her speech and language development. If you have any concerns about your child's hearing, be sure to ask your doctor for referral to an audiologist**



# لأن الوعي وقاية ..

إدارة التشخيص الصحي

Communication and Swallowing  
Disorders Dept.

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