

What Can Your Baby Hear Now?

Plus, What You Can Do For Your Baby's Hearing





Congratulations

on your journey to becoming a parent!

Did you know your baby's sense of hearing might be developing at this moment, depending where you are in your pregnancy?

Growing up fast! Many expectant parents are surprised to learn that a baby's ears and earlobes start to develop soon after conception. The parts of the ear that you can see (external ear and earlobes) start to form when mom is about eight weeks pregnant.

Can your baby hear you now? Your baby can start hearing as early as 5 months into your pregnancy. This means, sounds inside your body, like your heartbeat, stomach growling, television, music and your voice.

Right back at you! Your baby may respond to sound by moving in the womb; Mom might feel a kick. Baby may start to recognize mother's voice as a soothing tone and therefore his or her heart rate slows and calms. Headphones should not be used directly on mom's abdomen because the sound from each phone could sound as loud as a jet plane, depending on the decibels. It's always better to be on the safe side!



What to expect at birth

If your baby is born in a hospital

Hearing check

Typically, several hours after birth, a newborn screener will either visit mom's room or take the baby to a quiet room to do a hearing screening. Often, a test is done while your baby is sleeping. Hearing screenings do not cause your baby any pain. There are two types of screenings: an Otoacoustic Emission (OAE) test and an Auditory Brainstem Response (ABR) test that may be administered. The test conducted will depend on the equipment available at the hospital. Both methods are acceptable for screening, and the screener may let you know which test they are performing.

You'll get the results

The newborn screener will give you the results of the test verbally and in writing to take home with you.

If your baby is NOT born in a hospital

You'll want to schedule a hearing screening.

Depending on where your baby is born, there may not be a hearing screening administered. Be sure to schedule this test as soon as possible. It is recommended before one month of age. You can discuss places that offer hearing screenings with your baby's medical provider or visit:

www.vahealth.org/hearing or www.ehdipals.org for locations near you.

Once you get home



If your baby passed-great news! Regular pediatric appointments will help maintain your baby's overall health. If you ever start to notice changes in your baby's reaction to sound, it's important to trust your instincts and consult with a provider.

If your baby failed- It is recommended that another hearing screening occur within one month of the first test. If the hospital doesn't set an appointment for you, make sure to schedule your own as soon as you get home. Since it can take a few weeks to get in to see the screener or pediatric audiologist, this will help ensure your baby is on track to a diagnosis by 3 months of age.



Being “in the know” will help identify a hearing loss - just in time!

The 1-3-6 Rule For Your Baby's Hearing



1 Be sure your baby has a hearing screening before leaving the hospital. If your baby is not born in a hospital, be sure your baby has a hearing screening before 1 month of age. If your baby fails the first time, try to have a rescreening within one month of the initial failed result.

3 If your baby fails, a hearing evaluation is advised before 3 months of age. A hearing evaluation involves further testing by a pediatric audiologist who can diagnose your child's hearing. The goal is to get a diagnosis by 3 months of age.

6 If your child is diagnosed with hearing loss, the good news is that your baby can receive early intervention services as soon as possible and it is recommended no later than 6 months of age. You can help your child stay on track for school by enrolling him/her in early intervention as soon as diagnosed.

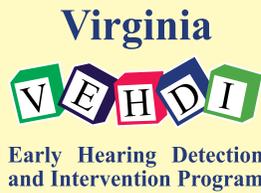
References:

National Center for Hearing Assessment and Management <http://www.infanthearing.org/>
CDC <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/hearingloss>

Graven and Brown, Newborn and Infant Nursing Review Volume 8 Issue 4 pages 187-193 December 2008



Use your smartphone
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