



Your rights

As with all health services, your rights are protected by the Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights.

It is important that you have enough information to help you decide whether to go ahead with your baby's hearing screen. You may also want to discuss it with your partner, family or whānau.

If you have concerns or want to know more about newborn hearing screening, check with:

- the hospital that carries out the newborn hearing screening
- your midwife, doctor, specialist or Well Child provider.

The Well Child Tamariki Ora checks include questions for parents about their baby's hearing. The nurse also asks questions about your child's hearing, speech and language progress. Should you have concerns about the way your child listens or responds, it is important to discuss this with your Well Child nurse, early childhood teacher or your doctor.

 *The Universal Newborn Hearing Screening and Early Intervention Programme is overseen by the National Screening Unit of the Ministry of Health. It was established by the Ministries of Health and Education to ensure better outcomes for babies with hearing loss and their families and whānau.*

For further information about newborn hearing screening, visit the National Screening Unit's website: www.nsu.govt.nz

This resource is available from www.healthed.govt.nz or the authorised provider at your local DHB.



New Zealand Government

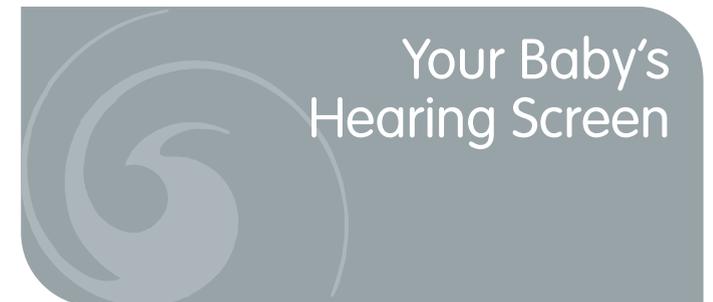
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Newborn Screening
Free health checks for your baby

Newborn Hearing Screening



Your Baby's
Hearing Screen



All babies are checked at birth to see that all is well. Some of your baby's health checks are called 'screening'.



Newborn hearing screening – why does my baby need it?

You will be offered newborn hearing screening to check whether your baby can hear well. The screen is designed to pick up moderate to profound hearing loss. It will not necessarily pick up a mild hearing loss. If babies can't hear, it's hard for them to understand and communicate with you. If your baby does have a hearing loss, finding it early is good for their language, learning and social development.

What is newborn hearing screening?

Your baby's hearing will be screened with:

- a small soft-tipped earpiece placed in your baby's ear – this makes soft clicking sounds and a computer shows how your baby's ears respond. (These quiet sounds are called otoacoustic emissions or OAE.)



If this screen does not give a clear result, more checks will be made, using:

- ear cups with soft clicking sounds played through them. Special sensors are placed on your baby's head and the response from your baby's hearing nerve is picked up. (This is called an automated auditory brainstem response or AABR screen.)



When and where will the newborn hearing screening be done?

Screening is usually done before you and your baby go home from the hospital. If your baby is not born in a hospital or not screened before you go home, newborn hearing screening may be offered at your local health clinic or hospital outpatients' clinic. You can be with your baby during screening.

Will it hurt my baby?

Newborn hearing screening does not hurt or harm your baby. It is simple and safe – most babies sleep through it. A screen may take 15–20 minutes and is best done when your baby is settled or sleeping.

What happens after the newborn hearing screening?

You will be told the results straight away.

Some babies need another screen because the earlier screening did not show a strong enough response in one or both ears.

This may be because:

- your baby was unsettled
- there was too much noise in the testing room
- there was fluid in your baby's middle ear
- your baby may have a hearing loss.

If this happens with your baby's hearing screen, you will be offered a repeat screen, either before leaving the hospital or as an outpatient appointment.

What if a repeat screen does not give a clear result?

This may not mean your baby has a hearing loss. You will be referred to a hearing specialist (audiologist) who will do more tests and give further advice.

