



## Why does my baby need further hearing tests?

### WA Newborn Hearing Screening Program

There can be a number of reasons your baby did not obtain a clear result from their hearing screening:

- Your baby may have some degree of temporary or permanent hearing loss.
- It could be that there was fluid or other matter present that had entered the ear canal during the birth process.
- Presence of temporary middle ear fluid.
- Your baby being too restless at the time of the screen.

If your baby did not have a pass result in both ears, they will need further hearing testing. A paediatric audiologist, who is a specialist in infant hearing testing, will carry out these tests. Once a follow-up appointment is provided to you, it is very important that you attend in order to find out as soon as possible how well your baby hears, and minimize the impact any potential hearing loss has on your baby's speech and language development.

### What will happen at the next hearing test?

A number of tests will be performed to find out how well your baby hears. The main test is called the Auditory Brainstem Response (ABR). It may appear similar to the screening test, but provides much more detailed information about your baby's hearing.

Sensors, similar to those used in the first screen, will be placed on your baby's head. Clicking sounds of different tones and loudness will be played through earphones and the responses recorded to find out the softest sounds your baby can hear.

### How do I prepare my baby for the assessment?

Most of the testing is performed whilst your baby sleeps, so it is best if your baby arrives awake but tired. It is helpful to arrive a little early to give yourself time to feed and settle your baby so they sleep in their appointment. If your baby does not sleep, your audiologist may not be able to complete the test.

You must stay with your baby throughout the assessment. If you have other children, please arrange to have someone care for them at home or elsewhere as the environment must be as quiet as possible.

Testing can sometimes take up to 3 hours if baby is unsettled. It is recommended to set aside the morning or afternoon depending on when your appointment has been scheduled. You may like to bring a support person with you.

## What will happen after the assessment?

The paediatric audiologist will be able to inform you of the results and explain what the results mean, usually on the same day.

If your baby is found to have any problems with their hearing, you will be referred to the appropriate services to discuss treatment options and support. With your permission, a report will be sent to these services and a copy will also be sent to you, your GP and/or your child health nurse.

Information is available to guide families of children who have a hearing loss. This will be given to you to help you to make choices and decisions for the services you will need for your child. There are also practical tips and ways to link to other support services for you and your baby.

## Cost

This assessment is free of charge for Medicare card holders. For overseas residents, including 457 visas, there is a charge for each occasion of service. This amount is reviewed at the beginning of each financial year. You will be advised on the charge at the time of booking. A rebate through private health cover may be possible.

To access more information about eligibility, please contact Patient Billing at the hospital on 9340 7586 or email: [PMH.PatientBilling@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:PMH.PatientBilling@health.wa.gov.au).

## Assistance

Testing is usually performed in Perth. If you live outside the metropolitan area you will be given information on how to access the Patient Assisted Transport Scheme (PATS).

If you choose to see a private audiologist, there may be a cost and you will need to discuss fees with the audiology provider. Not all audiology centres provide specialised testing for this age group so it is important to ask if they perform diagnostic ABR testing on neonates. It is helpful to ask staff to send a report to the newborn hearing screening service so that the program knows your baby has been followed up appropriately.

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact the newborn hearing screening office or your community health nurse to be given all the support you need. We are here to help, and it is really important your baby attends.

**This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with a disability.**

### **Child and Adolescent Health Service**

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Contact a qualified healthcare professional for any medical advice needed.

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