



Public Health
England

NHS

Looking at your baby's hearing

An **easy guide** to screening tests for your new baby



Contents: what is in this booklet

Page



Your choice

3



About these tests

4



The first type of test

6



The second type of test

7



Test results

8



Your choice



This booklet has information about the tests that your baby can have.

The tests can find out if your baby might have a hearing problem. It is important for babies to hear well so they can learn to speak.

These tests can find problems early. They may not find every problem.

If we find a problem early we can help your baby.



You can choose if you want your baby to have these tests. You can say no to any of them.

If you do not want your baby to have the tests we will give you a list of checks to do as your baby grows.



If you are worried, you can talk to your midwife or doctor.

They can help you decide if you want your baby to have these tests.



About these tests



We only show the results of the tests to health staff who need to see them.



It is important to tell your midwife or health visitor about any health problems you and the baby's father have, as your baby may have them too.



These tests check how well your baby is hearing. Very few babies are born with hearing problems.

If we find a problem early we can help your baby with their listening and talking.

These tests will not hurt your baby.



Your baby may have the hearing tests in hospital before you go home.

Or you may be asked to go to a clinic for the tests after you have gone home.

Or a health visitor may do the tests in your home.



The first type of test



The first test takes a few minutes.

A soft earpiece is put in your baby's ear. It is a bit like a headphone.

Soft clicking noises are played into it.



A machine can check if your baby hears the sounds.



Sometimes this first test does not work well. It does not always mean your baby has a hearing problem.

It may be that your baby was not very relaxed. It may be that there were some other noises going on.



It may be that your baby had some fluid blocking his or her ear. This is very common in new babies and gets better in time.



The second type of test



We might need to do another test.

This second test takes longer. It takes 5 to 15 minutes.

The test has 3 steps.

1. We put 3 small pads on your baby's head and neck.
2. We put soft headphones on your baby's ears.
3. Soft clicking noises are played.



Test results



We will tell you the results straight away.

Most babies will not have a hearing problem.



Sometimes hearing problems are found as your baby gets older.

If you have any worries about your baby's hearing, talk to your health visitor or doctor.



If the tests show your baby might have a hearing problem we will send them to a hearing expert (audiologist). It is very important to go to these appointments.

Being sent to a hearing expert (audiologist) does not mean your baby has bad hearing. It is just more likely.



The hearing expert (audiologist) will see your baby within 4 weeks.



You will be given a red book to keep a record of your baby's health checks in. Keep the red book safe.

Take it with you when you see anyone about your baby's health.



There are some hearing checks in your baby's red book.

It is important to do these checks as your baby grows up.



It is important to tell your midwife or health visitor if you move home.

First published: February 2017

© Crown copyright 2017

Re-use of Crown copyright material (excluding logos) is allowed under the terms of the Open Government Licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/2/ for terms and conditions.

Images courtesy of:

Otodynamics Ltd – page 6

Photosymbols – calendar (pages 6 and 8), house move (page 9)

NHS Photo Library – page 8

PHE publications gateway number: 2015399



Public Health England leads the NHS Screening Programmes