

How will you know if I hear you?

## Your baby's free hearing screen



The Queensland Health Healthy Hearing Program aims to identify babies born with a permanent hearing loss. It is free and available to all babies born in Queensland.

[www.health.qld.gov.au/healthyhearing](http://www.health.qld.gov.au/healthyhearing)



### Hearing and speech checklist for...

#### Birth to 3 months

- Settles to familiar sounds or voices
- Is startled by or jumps when there is a sudden noise

#### 3 to 6 months

- Turns head or eyes toward interesting sounds
- Appears to listen
- Wakes easily to sound
- Starts to make speech-like sounds

#### 6 to 12 months

- Understands simple words such as 'no' and 'bye-bye'
- Begins to copy speech sounds
- Turns head to soft sounds

#### 12 to 18 months

- Appears to understand more words each week
- When asked, points to people, body parts or toys
- Follows simple spoken instructions i.e. 'sit down'
- Says two to three real words i.e. 'ball', 'dog', 'car'

If you have any concerns about your baby's hearing, contact your baby's doctor or staff at your local clinic.

# Your baby's hearing screen

Healthy hearing is critical to your child's speech and language development from the earliest months of life. About one or two babies out of every 1000 will have a significant hearing loss.

If a hearing loss is not picked up at an early stage, it could affect your child's speech and language development and future learning at school.

## Hearing screen appointment for

.....  
Date .....

Time .....

Place .....

## What does a 'refer' result mean?

A 'refer' result on hearing screening can be caused by a number of things:

- your baby was unsettled during the screen
- there may have been background noise during the screen
- your baby may have had fluid or a temporary blockage in the ear after birth
- a small number of babies may have a temporary or permanent hearing loss. The degree of loss can vary from mild through to profound.

If your baby's first hearing screen shows a 'refer' result on one or both ears, a second hearing screen on both ears will be done.

If your baby's second hearing screen shows a 'refer' result on one or both ears, you will be offered testing by an audiologist and referral to the Family Support Service. You will be given an additional brochure that explains this in more detail.

## Where can I get more information?

If you would like more information about your baby's hearing screen, contact your local hospital, your baby's doctor, or staff at your local clinic.

## Part of baby's health checks

The Healthy Hearing program aims to identify babies born with a permanent hearing loss. It is free and available to all babies born in Queensland.

Your baby will be offered a number of health checks after they are born. One of these will be a screen for hearing loss. This screen should be done as soon as possible after birth. If the screen is not done before you and your baby leave hospital, your baby can still have the screen as an outpatient soon after you go home.

## How is the screen done?

A hearing screen does not hurt your baby. A nurse or a person trained in hearing screening will do the screen when your baby is quiet or asleep. Several small pads will be placed gently on your baby's head and a soft earphone will be lightly placed over each ear. Soft clicking sounds will then be played into your baby's ears. The pads will record your baby's responses to the sounds.

## When will I know the results?

The results of the screen will be known immediately, and will be recorded in your baby's Personal Health Record. The person doing the screen will discuss the results with you. Ask questions if there is anything you are not sure of.

## What information will the screen give us?

For each ear, the screen will give either a 'pass' result or a 'refer' result. The screen will not give detailed information about your baby's hearing.

## What does a 'pass' result mean?

A 'pass' result on both ears indicates that it is unlikely your baby has a hearing loss that will affect their speech and language development.

A small number of babies may pass the screen, but have known risk factors for types of hearing loss which take longer to appear. If this is the case your baby will be offered a hearing test with an audiologist sometime before their first birthday. The timing of this test will depend on your child's specific needs. While very few babies with these risk factors will develop a hearing loss, it is important to ensure your baby has this test.

Remember that the hearing of all babies and children can change over time. If at any time you have concerns about your baby or child's hearing, contact your doctor or staff at your local clinic. Hearing tests can be done on babies and children of any age.

