



Department of Audiology and Hearing Therapy

Your Baby's Visit to the Audiology Department Information for Parents

Your baby has been referred to Audiology at Dorset County Hospital for further tests after his, or her, newborn hearing screen or following referral by another professional.

All babies referred to Audiology in the West Dorset area will be offered an appointment for assessment of their hearing in the Audiology Department at Dorset County Hospital. These appointments usually last around an hour, although the duration can range from 30 minutes to over 2 hours (so it is best to allow plenty of time on your car parking ticket). You will be seen by one of our Clinical Scientists who will perform all of the testing on your baby. A second audiologist may also be present to assist with the testing. You are welcome to bring a friend or relative with you if you wish. If you have other children, it may be a good idea to arrange childcare for them at home or to bring another adult with you who can look after them in the waiting room.

The Audiology Department is located in the South Wing of Dorset County Hospital. If you enter the hospital via South Wing Entrance 2 (S2), we are the first door on your right. Parking at the hospital can be difficult as the car parks are frequently busy, so it is best to allow plenty of time.

What will happen at my baby's Audiology appointment?

The tests we carry out are similar to those used for your baby's newborn hearing screen. However they will be able to give us more detailed information about your baby's hearing. The tests will not harm your baby in any way. They are usually performed while your baby is asleep and you will stay with him or her for the whole appointment.

One of the tests that may be used is an Otoacoustic Emissions (OAE) test. This involves putting a small soft-tipped earpiece in the outer part of your baby's ear. The earpiece sends clicking sounds into the ear. In response to this, the inner ear (known as the cochlea), usually produces an emission or "echo", which is detected by the testing equipment.

Another test, which we perform on the majority of babies referred to Audiology, is the Auditory Brainstem Response (ABR) test. This test is most successful if your baby is fast asleep, either in their car seat or pram or in your arms. We will gently rub an area of your baby's skin high on their forehead, above one eyebrow and behind each ear and stick small sensors in each of these positions. A small earphone is placed in the outer part of your baby's ear, which sends a series of sounds down the ear (similar to the OAE test). A computer then measures the responses from your baby's ear via the small sensors.

We will be able to explain all of the results to you at the end of the appointment, before you leave, and you will have the opportunity to ask any questions you may have. We will also write a letter back to your GP, health visitor and any other professionals involved in your baby's care. We will send you a copy of this letter in the post too. Occasionally, we are unable to obtain a full set of results in one session (e.g. if your baby awakes before testing is complete). In these cases a second appointment will be booked on another day to finish off the testing.

Is there anything I can do to prepare my baby for their appointment?

As mentioned previously, testing is most successful if your baby is fast asleep. Parents generally find that keeping their baby awake in the morning prior to the appointment helps in addition to a good feed just before they arrive. It may be a good idea to also bring an extra feed with you. We have bottle warming facilities in the department and we can provide a quiet area for breast feeding. There are also baby changing facilities nearby.

Contact Numbers:

We hope that you have found this information useful. If you have any questions or are worried about anything, please telephone the Audiology staff at Dorset County Hospital:

Audiology Department: **01305 255563**

Useful Websites:

National Deaf Children's Society: <https://www.ndcs.org.uk/information-and-support/first-diagnosis/newborn-hearing-screening/>

NHS Choices: <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/pages/newborn-hearing-test.aspx>

GOV.UK: <https://www.gov.uk/topic/population-screening-programmes/newborn-hearing>

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If you have feedback regarding the accuracy of the information contained in this leaflet, or if you would like a list of references used to develop this leaflet, please email pals@dchft.nhs.uk



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