

NEWBORN HEARING SCREENING IN THE NICU



Deidré Stroebel
Audiologist and Speech Pathologist

RESULT	PASS ✓	REFER ✗
INTERPRETATION	The inner ear and hearing nerve response to sound is appropriate in both ears and your baby is unlikely to have a permanent severe hearing loss.	<p>The response of the inner ear and/or hearing nerve in one or both ears is inadequate to pass the NHS tests. This may or may not indicate a hearing loss. This result indicates that baby is referred for further testing. A "refer" test result can be obtained because of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is temporary fluid in the middle ear or blockage in the ear canal • Neuro-maturation of the hearing nerve and brain is not yet complete • There is a permanent hearing loss
FOLLOW-UP SCHEDULE	A follow-up re-test is recommended at one year of age to monitor hearing. Please arrange this appointment yourself.	A follow-up re-test is recommended in two to six weeks in order to repeat the NHS test. Please arrange this appointment yourself. It is very important that you attend this appointment in case your baby does have permanent hearing loss.

Please feel free to contact us should you require any additional information.



NEWBORN HEARING SCREENING

IN THE NEONATAL INTENSIVE CARE UNIT (NICU)



INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

DO YOU KNOW ...

... that your baby's hearing should be checked before leaving the NICU? The newborn hearing screening (NHS) tests help to identify babies who have permanent hearing loss as early as possible. This means parents can get the support and advice they need, and baby can get help right from the start.

Panorama

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Contact us today for more information or to make an appointment.

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LEARN MORE



WHAT IS NHS?

Hearing loss is invisible and impossible to identify through routine clinical examinations. Therefore, NHS is necessary to identify babies who might be born with, or develop a hearing loss and who require further testing. The NHS test is non-invasive, pain free and is easily and quickly measured in minutes. It is highly recommended that all newborns have their hearing screened by the time they are 6 weeks old, preferably before they leave the hospital after birth.

WHY IS NHS IMPORTANT?

Hearing loss is the most common congenital condition, affecting 3 babies per 100 who have been admitted to the NICU. Hearing loss will negatively affect a baby's development. Fortunately if the hearing loss is identified early and intervention is implemented, babies with hearing loss have excellent outcomes and are likely to reach their full potential. A NHS test is necessary to determine if a baby might have a hearing loss which would otherwise go undetected. Without NHS, hearing loss is typically detected only after one year of age which results in a language and developmental delay.

WHEN IS NHS DONE?

A NHS program is managed and implemented by the practice of Deidré Stroebel Inc. in this hospital. The program is supported and encouraged by all hospital and medical personnel, including Paediatricians and Neonatologists.

- The staff of the NICU will arrange an appointment for your baby when he/she is ready to undergo NHS.
- You will be contacted by a NHS professional and offered a NHS test for your baby before he/she is discharged from the NICU. Should you give informed consent, a case history will be conducted and you will sign a consent form/give verbal consent.
- The NHS test cost is not included in the hospital birthing package and is billed separately. The account will be sent to your medical aid for your

convenience, however, should the NHS test cost not be covered by your medical aid, you will be responsible for the payment of the account. Please contact your medical aid prior to the NHS test if you are unsure of the coverage (codes: 821012; 821580 & 821505; ICD10 code: Z13.5; Practice number: 8209081).

- The NHS test is conducted on baby in the NICU ward. Please contact us to arrange an appointment for NHS if your baby was not tested in the NICU ward.
- The results will be discussed with you immediately following the test and will be recorded in doctor's medical notes and on a sticker in your baby's clinic booklet. Should you not be present during the NHS, the results will be conveyed to you telephonically.
- Your baby can still develop a permanent hearing loss after the NHS test. It is important that all babies return for a follow-up re-test when they are one year old. Please arrange this appointment yourself. If you are concerned about your baby's hearing and/or language development, do not hesitate to return sooner.



HOW IS NHS PERFORMED?

The NHS tests can only be performed when baby is sleeping or calm. Your baby does not have to react or respond. Two objective automated tests are used.

- The otoacoustic emission test uses a small soft-tipped earpiece which is placed in your baby's ears and soft clicking sounds are then played. When the ear receives the sound, the hair cells in the inner ear, called the cochlea, respond and cochlear echoes are emitted which can be picked up by the NHS test equipment.
- The auditory brainstem response test is performed by placing three electrodes on your baby's head. A small soft-tipped earpiece is then placed in your baby's ears and soft clicking sounds are played. Electrical activity generated by the hearing nerve as the sound travels up to the brain can be recorded by the electrodes and is represented as waveforms on the equipment screen.

The results of the NHS test are indicated as follows:
(See table on reverse side)