Important Information for Parents-To-Be

Today's Decisions Affect Your Baby's Future

There are a lot of wonderful plans to be made when you're about to have a baby. But you'll also be faced with many very important decisions.

Your baby may be delivered at a hospital that has been approved to participate in the California Newborn Hearing Screening Program (NHSP). During that hospital stay you will be offered the opportunity to have your baby's hearing screened before going home.

As hearing loss can be invisible, your decision to have your baby's hearing screened is important. Now, technology makes it possible to detect a hearing loss in the early days of a baby's life

The first months and years of a child's life are very important for developing communication skills. A baby who has a hearing loss or deafness may have difficulty in developing normal language skills or may not do well in school. This is why it is important to identify the loss early and provide special services to the baby and family.

The American Academy of Pediatrics and other professional organization recommend hearing for all newborns and encourage close monitoring of children's hearing throughout the early years.

How Many Babies Have a Hearing Loss?

Serious hearing loss is found in about 2-4 out of 1000 babies. About 50% of babies with hearing loss have no known signs or risk factors, like serious illness or family history of deafness. Some babies may develop hearing loss later in life from repeated ear infections, meningitis, head injury or other medical conditions. Sometimes babies lose their hearing and the reason is never known.

How Do We Screen Hearing?

The Newborn Hearing Screening takes place before you and your baby leave the hospital. The screening takes only a few minutes while your baby sleeps. Soft sounds are played through earphones specially made for babies. Your baby's response to the sound is automatically measured by Otoacoustic Emissions (OAE) or Auditory Brainstem Response (ABR). You will receive the results of the screen before you leave the hospital.

Today's easy screening methods are very reliable. Rarely will a baby with a hearing loss be missed.

Who Pays for Hearing Screening?

The cost of Newborn Hearing Screening may be covered by your health insurance. Medi-Cal will pay for screening for eligible babies.

What is the California Newborn Hearing Screening Program?

The California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) Children's Medical Services (CMS) has a statewide Newborn Hearing Screening Program. The Program helps identity hearing loss in infants and can guide families to appropriate services needed to help develop communication skills.

The goal of California's Newborn Hearing Screening Program is to identify babies with hearing loss and link them with services by six months of age. The program has Hearing Coordination Centers that work with families, health care providers and hospitals to help make sure children get needed services.

The Newborn Hearing Screening Program collects information about your babies hearing screening as per Section 124119 of the Health and Safety Code. The Hearing Coordination Centers may use this information to assist you and your baby in getting to services you may need. It is possible that the Hearing Coordination Center may contact you about follow-up services.

If you have questions or want to learn more about the Newborn Hearing Screening Program, call

Toll Free 1-877-388-5301

or visit us on the web at

www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/nhsp

California Newborn Hearing Screening PROGRAM

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