

# Genetics of Hearing Loss



## What Causes Hearing Loss?

Hearing loss has many different causes in infants and adults. About half of babies born deaf/hard of hearing have an environmental cause (like injury or a virus), and the other half have a genetic cause. The cause is not always possible to find, but it may be important for parents to try.

## How do I know if the cause is genetic?

You can talk with your baby's primary care provider about a referral for a genetic evaluation. Even if you do not have any family members who are deaf or hard of hearing, the cause of your baby's hearing loss could still be genetic. If you do have other family members with hearing loss, you should tell your baby's health provider.

## How will it help me to know if the cause is genetic?

When you get a genetic evaluation for your baby, it can help you know how to best care for them. If your baby's hearing loss is genetic, it could be one part of a larger condition that may affect future health or development. A genetic evaluation may be able to tell you and your health care provider what to expect now and later. It can also help guide what care decisions you make, like how to communicate with your baby and what interventions or education tools will help them learn and grow. Genetic evaluations can also help health providers identify family members who have a greater chance of having a baby who is deaf or hard of hearing.