

Newborn Hearing Screening: Follow-Up

MEDICAL FACT SHEET

WHAT HOSPITALS CAN DO TO IMPROVE FOLLOW-UP RATES

Why parents might not return for follow-up

- Screening results were not explained well.
- The importance of follow-up evaluation was not stressed.
- Appointment was not made for baby.
- Barriers such as transportation or insurance.

Information to share with parents

- The results of the hearing screen and their meaning.
- Hearing cannot be tested for at home - newborns with hearing loss can still startle to noises like hand clapping.
- The value of prompt follow-up hearing testing.
- Contact information for keeping the scheduled hearing follow-up appointment.

What nursery staff should know

- Without newborn screening and timely follow-up, hearing loss often remains undetected until a child is 2 or 3 years old.
- When hearing loss goes undetected, language development is delayed.
- Babies with REFER (Did Not Pass) results need complete rescreen before 1 month of age and diagnostic testing before 3 months of age.
- Careful communication with parents is essential to ensure that parents keep their baby's follow-up appointment.
- Hospital refer rates should be between 1-4%.
- Higher refer rates lead to increased lost-to-follow-up, and reduce physician confidence in program effectiveness.

How can staff make sure parents keep follow-up appointments?

- **Develop a standard protocol**
 - § Review hearing screening results with parents.
 - § Ensure correct Primary Care Provider is provided to MDH.
 - § Provide parents with written information about hearing screening.
 - § Schedule follow-up appointments prior to discharge.
 - § Use result notification forms provided by MDH to notify parents and providers of screening results.
 - § Document hearing screening information (results and follow-up steps taken) in a hospital logbook.
 - § Refer to MDH recommendations for communicating results to families.
- **Develop protocols to deal with special circumstances**
 - § **Equipment Problems.** Have a plan in place to get babies whose hearing was not screened back to the nursery or to a clinic site before 1 month of age.
 - § **Babies who miss rescreen appointments.** Contact family to set-up new time and further educate on the importance of follow-up testing for hearing loss.
 - § Refer to local public health for follow-up support.