

Does My Baby Have Hearing Loss?

Description

It can be difficult to tell if young children have hearing loss, but it's important to know. Hearing is an essential part of social, emotional and cognitive development in young children. Even mild hearing loss can be enough to have an effect on your child's ability to develop speech and language. Luckily, if you can catch problems early on, they can be overcome before they cause a problem. What signs should you be looking for?

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Causes of Hearing Loss

Hearing loss can be a birth defect or it can be caused later on. Hearing loss can occur in premature babies, babies born with newborn jaundice or babies with a family history of hearing loss. Some medications can cause hearing loss, as can birth complications, loud noises or infections. [Hearing health](#) is important to protect, so know the causes and try to avoid them.

Symptoms Of Hearing Loss

All newborns should have a hearing test before they leave the hospital. If they don't pass, then they should be tested again within three months, in case debris or fluid in the ear caused the failure, rather than hearing loss. After these tests, there are signs to watch out for yourself, although children should continue to have hearing tests at regular intervals between the ages of 4 and 10 to [learn more](#) about their hearing.

For newborns, note their reaction to sudden loud noises, as even newborns should jump at these. By 3 months, they should be able to recognize your voice. At 6 months, most babies will be able to turn their eyes towards the sound of a noise. By 12 months, they should be imitating sounds and starting to produce a few words, like "Dada" or "bye".

For toddlers, you can look out for limited speech or difficulty learning. Your toddler might appear to be attentive, or frequently ask for music or the television to be turned up louder. They might fail to respond in conversation, or to their name and might become easily frustrated when there is a lot of background noises.

If you notice these signs, don't wait for your child's next hearing screen and make an appointment with your Doctor. They can refer you to a pediatric audiologist who will [test their hearing](#) to identify if there is a problem and how best to deal with it. If there is hearing loss, don't panic. There are lots of ways to help.

There are some surgeries and medical treatments that can help with hearing loss, but the most common solution is hearing aids. Technology in hearing aids is improving all the time, so they are now even smaller than ever, making them suitable for even very young children. They can be fitted comfortably, helping your child to hear properly, allowing them to catch up to their peers with their learning and development.

Make sure to protect their hearing, by not exposing them to prolonged loud noises, and using earplugs and ear defenders when appropriate.

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