

HOW TO LOCATE A QUALIFIED AUDIOLOGIST

All Members of the Audiological Society of Australia (ASA) are University Graduates bound by a Professional Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice and have access to postgraduate education programs. Look for the letters MAudSA (CCP) after the audiologist's name to ensure that you are consulting a qualified audiologist who has completed the ASA Certificate of Clinical Practice (CCP).

TO OBTAIN A FREE DIRECTORY OF CLINICS WHERE QUALIFIED AUDIOLOGISTS WORK VISIT:

www.audiology.asn.au

or contact us on
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Your Hearing Health Professionals



WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO HAVE A HEARING TEST EARLY?

Early detection of hearing loss is very important to a child's development. Hearing is essential for learning to talk and the most critical period for acquiring spoken language is in the first year of life. A small number of babies are born with a hearing loss that could affect their speech and language skills. Even a mild hearing loss can affect a child's ability to speak and to understand oral language. The earlier hearing loss is detected, the sooner a child may be helped, therefore giving babies with a hearing loss the best possible start in life.

IS THERE A RISK MY BABY MAY HAVE A HEARING LOSS?

There are some known factors, which may put a baby at risk of having a hearing loss. Your baby should have a hearing test performed by a qualified audiologist if:

- You have concerns your baby cannot hear properly.
- There is a family history of permanent deafness.
- Your baby was exposed to an infection during pregnancy, such as rubella, CMV, toxoplasmosis, AIDS, syphilis or herpes.
- Your baby had complications as a newborn, such as very high jaundice levels, severe lack of oxygen, bacterial meningitis or encephalitis.
- Your baby was born with an abnormality anywhere on the head or neck, such as a cleft palate, ear tags or pits.
- Your baby was born with a syndrome such as Down's Syndrome.

WHAT DOES A HEARING TEST INVOLVE?

Your child's hearing can be tested at any age. Your baby's response to the sounds they can hear will depend upon their age and stage of development. Special test methods are used with infants, toddlers and young children. For infants, there are three types of tests that can be used which do not need the cooperation of the child. These tests are performed whilst your baby is asleep and are not painful or uncomfortable.



1. The Auditory Brainstem Response (ABR) test may be used. This procedure measures the activity of various parts of the nerve pathway from the ear to the brain when a sound is administered. During the ABR clicking sounds are presented to the infant's ears through earplugs or soft earphones while the infant sleeps. The ear's response to the sounds is measured using small electrodes placed on the infant's head and then measured by computer.
2. Newborns and older children may have their hearing assessed using a procedure called Otoacoustic Emissions (OAEs). OAEs measure whether or not the outer hair cells in the cochlea are moving normally in response to sound. During this procedure a small earphone and microphone are placed in the ear canal. Sounds are presented through the earphone and a normal inner ear responds with an echo that is picked up by the microphone.
3. Auditory Steady State Response (ASSR) is recorded in the same way we measure an ABR. This test allows recording of the auditory system's response to specific frequencies and different intensities.

When a child is six months of age or older, game-like activities can be used to test hearing. During this type of testing, sounds are presented through a speaker or headphones. The child responds to sounds either by turning his or her head or by playing a game.

SHOULD MY CHILD HAVE A HEARING TEST?

There are some other reasons to have a hearing test. These include:

- Your child's speech is not developing as expected.
- Your child has other developmental delay.
- Your child has had bacterial meningitis or other serious illness.
- Your child has had many ear infections.
- You are concerned your child is not responding properly and often asks for repeats.

If you are unsure if your child should have a hearing test, ask a qualified audiologist, paediatrician, family doctor or maternal & child health nurse.

WHAT IF MY BABY CAN'T HEAR?

Your audiologist will explain the nature of the hearing loss and discuss options with you. Some hearing problems are temporary and can be improved with medical treatment. Others are permanent and may require the use of hearing aids. Early management of hearing loss is essential to a child's social, academic, speech and language development. Early education programs are also available and play an important role in helping children with hearing concerns reach their full potential.

WHERE CAN I GET FURTHER INFORMATION?

Remember that hearing can be accurately tested at any age. If you are concerned about your child's hearing, have their hearing checked, even if they have had a newborn hearing screening or other hearing tests before, as hearing can change. Ask a qualified audiologist, paediatrician, family doctor or maternal & child health nurse to arrange a hearing test.