

Minnesota Department of Health

Newborn Hearing Screening: Follow-Up

MEDICAL FACT SHEET

WHAT CLINICS CAN DO TO IMPROVE FOLLOW-UP RATES

Why parents might not return for hearing follow-up

- Parents don't fully understand their baby's screening results.
- Parents don't fully understand the importance of a follow-up evaluation.
- Parents were not provided with necessary contact and resource information.

What parents should know

- The results of their baby's hearing screen and what the results mean.
- Hearing cannot be tested at home - newborns with hearing loss can still startle to noises like hand clapping.
- Why a prompt, objective follow-up evaluation is necessary.
- Contact information for keeping the follow-up appointment.

What clinic staff should know

- Without newborn screening, hearing loss often remains undetected until a child is 2 or 3 years old.
- When hearing loss goes undetected, language development is delayed and children face adverse outcomes.
- Babies with REFER results need to be seen promptly for further testing. Careful communication with parents is essential to ensure that parents keep their baby's follow-up appointment.

What should be done at the first clinic visit?

- **Develop a standard protocol**
 - § Before visit, make sure hearing results are in the infant's chart. Look for results on fax from hospital or Parent Notification Form provided by MDH.
 - § Obtain any missing hearing screens from the hospital before the visit. Contact nursery to have results sent.
 - § Encourage providers to review hearing screening results with parents. Parents may not mention concerns with hearing even if a hearing loss is present.
 - § Fax rescreening and diagnostic testing results to MDH.
- **Develop protocols to deal with special circumstances**
 - § **Babies born outside of a hospital** - Be prepared to offer initial hearing screening in a timely manner. You may need to provide extra education for these parents.
 - § **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.

Making referrals

- **Rescreening** - work with the hospital, clinic, or audiology staff to make sure babies with REFER results are seen promptly. Talk with parents about the importance of keeping follow-up appointments.
- **Diagnostic Evaluations** - determine where you will send babies who fail rescreening. These babies should see an audiologist or ENT who is comfortable evaluating very young children.