

# Your child's hearing test appointment: Information for you and your child



James Paget  
University Hospitals  
NHS Foundation Trust

Author: Gary Osborne, Lead Paediatric Audiologist

## Your child has been referred for hearing assessment.

At this appointment we will assess your child's hearing using techniques suitable to their level of development. This appointment may take up to 30 minutes. There will be 1 or 2 paediatric audiologists who will answer any questions you may have during and after the testing is complete.

To avoid distractions during testing, it would be helpful if other children did not come to this appointment.

The James Paget University Hospitals is a teaching hospital and therefore there may be other health care professionals present. If you do not want them to attend your child's appointment, please inform reception when you book in.

A hearing test is a simple, painless method of looking at the pathways of the ear. The hearing test may be performed by one or two audiologists in a sound treated room. When testing children, we have found that it works well if we treat the hearing test as a fun game. The audiologist will start by taking a history and then move to the hearing test game.

There are many ways to perform a hearing test on a child. We may perform just one test or a whole range of tests to obtain relevant information about your child's hearing. As every child is different, we will decide which method to use when you attend your appointment.



## Visual reinforcement audiometry (VRA)

The audiologist will ask you to put your child in a small chair or on your knee. An audiologist will sit in front of you and distract your child with a few simple toys. A sound will then be played through a speaker on one side. It's important that you sit back and relax so you don't give your child any clues. When your child turns to the sound, they will be rewarded with a visual clue such as an animated animal on a screen.

VRA testing when using a speaker tells us information about your child's overall hearing but it does not test each ear individually therefore sometimes it may be necessary to use small soft ear tips that will be placed in your child's ears so sound can be delivered to each ear separately.

This test can take up to 15 minutes depending on the child's concentration. It can be used for children aged 7 months to about 3 years of age but can also be used to test older children who are unable to take part in other forms of testing.

## Play audiometry

The audiologist will ask you to sit your child in a small chair or on your knee. An audiologist will sit in front of you with some toys such as blocks on a board. To understand the game a loud sound will be played through some headphones and the audiologist will condition your child to place a block on the board when they hear a sound. Once your child understands the game, headphones will be placed over their ears and different sounds will be played in their ears to what the quietest sound is they can hear.



When using headphones, the sounds go into the ear canal, through the middle ear to reach the inner ear. This is known as air conduction and tells us how the whole hearing system is responding to sound.

After we have tested with headphones it may be necessary to test your child's hearing using another device called a bone conductor. This is a small block that is placed behind your child's ear and tells how well the nerve of hearing is performing.

This test can take up to 15 minutes depending on the child's concentration. It can be used for children aged 2 ½ and over but can also be used to test older children who are unable to take part in other forms of testing.

## **Pure tone audiometry**

This is similar to play audiometry but instead of playing a game your child will be asked to press a button when they hear a sound. Again a bone conductor may be used to tell us more information about your child's hearing.

## **Tympanometry**

Tympanometry is a test that helps us see how well the middle ear is working. This is a simple and painless test which involves placing a soft ear tip in your child's ear and making sure they stay still for a few seconds.

## **Oto-acoustic emissions**

Oto-acoustic emissions is the test used to screen newborn babies hearing but it can provide valuable information about your child's hearing. It is a simple and painless test which involves placing a soft ear tip in your child's ear. They will hear a soft hum and all they have to do is keep still and quiet for a few moments.

## **Speech testing**

Sometimes speech testing is performed to see how well your child hears words. Your child will be asked to repeat or point out a word they hear and different volume levels.

## **After testing**

Once all the relevant testing has been completed, we will go through the results and discuss with you the management options.

## **Hearing test shows satisfactory hearing**

If the hearing test shows that your child has satisfactory hearing, then you will be discharged from the Audiology Clinic, and we will write a letter to you and your health professional whom referred you explaining the test results. You can always ask for another referral from your health professional if you suspect your child has hearing problems in the future.

## **Hearing test shows reduced hearing**

If the hearing test shows that your child's hearing is reduced and this is due to middle ear congestion (glue ear), then we will follow the current guidelines and arrange a repeat test at a later date. This is because 'glue ear' generally resolves on its own.

At the repeat hearing test, if there are still going problems with your child's hearing due to 'glue ear' we will then discuss a referral to the Ear, Nose and Throat Consultant for a medical opinion.

For non 'glue ear' hearing issues, we will discuss a future management plan and further testing if necessary.

**If you are unable to keep this appointment please telephone 01493 452353 or textphone 0792 024 6656 as soon as possible, so your appointment can be offered to another patient.**

If you do not attend / cancel your child's appointment without giving good notice or cancel your child's appointment more than twice, your child's referral will be reviewed and they may be discharged back to your doctor for re-referral if an appointment is still required.

If you think you are eligible for hospital transport please telephone 0345 241 3012

### Your Feedback

We want your visit to be as comfortable as possible - talk to the person in charge if you have any concerns. If the ward/department staff are unable to resolve it, then ask for our Patient Advice and Liaison (PALS) information. Please be assured that raising a concern will not impact on your care.

**Before leaving please complete a Friends and Family Test feedback card.**

Help us transform NHS services and to support patient choice.

### OUR VALUES

#### **Collaboration**

We work positively with others to achieve shared aims

#### **Accountability**

We act with professionalism and integrity, delivering what we commit to, embedding learning when things do not go to plan

#### **Respect**

We are anti-discriminatory, treating people fairly and creating a sense of belonging and pride

#### **Empowerment**

We speak out when things don't feel right, we are innovative and make changes to support continuous improvement

#### **Support**

We are compassionate, listen attentively and are kind to ourselves and each other



The hospital can arrange for an interpreter or person to sign to assist you in communicating effectively with staff during your stay. Please let us know.

**For a large print version of this leaflet, contact PALS 01493 453240**