



Parents Newsletter about New Born Hearing Screening

As of 20th September 2007

Why Hearing Screening?

2 out of 1000 babies are born with a high grade hearing defect. If this hearing defect is not discovered within the first months or even years of its life, it could negatively interfere with a child's entire development. A child can only learn normal speech if it can hear properly.

The first few months in the life of a new born child are of vital importance for its hearing development. This is the period of time in which the auditory pathway develops. The longer a hearing defect stays unnoticed the more difficult it is for the child to catch up on any speech deficit. With today's modern hearing-aid technology and early support the start in the life a child can be made a great deal easier if a hearing defect is discovered at an early stage.

The aim of the hearing screening test is to find out those newborns for whom it would be advisable to have a specialist audiological examination to detect possible hearing impairment during the first few weeks after birth.

How is Hearing Screening carried out?

There are two methods in which a baby's hearing can be tested. Method 1: sending of Oto Acoustic Emissions (OAE), a tone is sent to the ear. A healthy ear will register this tone and will answer with a second tone. In this case it means that tympanum and cochlea function properly. The second method also functions through sending a tone to the ear, the Automated Auditory Brainstem Response (AABR). 3 electrodes are placed on the forehead, neck and cheekbone before the tone is sent. These measure the brains reaction to the tone sent to the ear. If the tympanum, cochlea, auditory nerve and the lower part of the auditory pathway are functional then there will be a measurable reaction. One of these methods will be used for your child's Hearing Screening. The best time to carry out these examinations is when the baby is settled and preferably asleep. It only lasts a few minutes, is absolutely free of pain and is in no way upsetting for your baby.

What results are shown with Hearing Screening?

The results of the Hearing Screening are shown on the apparatus through "PASS" meaning no abnormality detected, and "REFER" meaning needs attention. If "PASS" shows up on the screen then everything is in order. If "REFER" shows up on the screen then further examinations will be necessary within the following few days.

If "REFER" shows up again, it does not necessarily mean that your child is deaf. However, we do strongly advise a exclusion test through a specialist for phoniatics and paediatric audiology. When you leave the clinic you will be given a handout where you can find your local specialist for phoneatics and paediatric audiology. This specialist will carry out further examinations concerning your child's hearing ability and will commence with treatment if necessary.

Stay alert!

A "PASS", no abnormality detected, is a positive result; however it only means that at the time of birth no serious hearing defect could be detected. Thus, a low grade hearing defect may not

have been found. Some hearing difficulties may develop after birth. It is therefore necessary to stay alert during your child's growth.

Your consent is important!

Only with your consent will we forward examination results and data. To guarantee every new born baby the chance of a Hearing Screening, and, in the case of a detected abnormality, to allow further examinations and treatment without loss of time, we appeal to all parents:

1. to agree with the examination and
2. to permit us to forward data (identification, name, date of birth, examination procedures, which ear, test results, and, in the case of a child who needs further attention, the mother's name, address and telephone number) to the Screening-Zentrale Westfalen-Lippe, at the clinic and outpatient clinic for phoniatrics and paediatric audiology of Universitätsklinikum Münster. Additional data regarding apparatus and test results will also be transferred, enabling continual quality control of methods and examinations. These measures serve quality assurance. Test results will be made anonymous and used for scientific analysis (i.e. recording the frequency of hearing defects, comparison of differing examination methods).

The task of the Screening Zentrale is to accompany children and parents until a child's hearing ability is analysed and treatment and therapy is adopted when necessary. In the case of parent forgetting an examination the Screening Zentrale will send a reminder. This way you as a parent have the assurance that no examination will be forgotten.

By taking part you will help all new born babies have the chance of Hearing Screening and in the case of a found hearing deficit further examinations and necessary treatment can take place without delay.

Participation on the Hearing Screening is optional. If you do not wish that data be forwarded onto others it will have no negative affect for you or your child. However, you will then, yourself, be responsible for the attendance of further examinations if a hearing defect is detected.

If you wish to withdraw your consent for taking part all you need to do is give us written notice and your child's personal data will be deleted. The address is: Screening-Zentrale Westfalen-Lippe, Klinik und Poliklinik für Phoniatrie und Pädaudiologie, Universitätsklinikum Münster, Kardinal-von Galen-Ring 10, 48149 Münster.

If you have any questions you can call the Screening-Zentrale Westfalen-Lippe under the **info-telephone: 0251-8355931**. Office hours are from Monday to Friday mornings from 9 - 12. You can also reach us by email – info@hoerscreening-wl.de. Additional information can be found on our homepage www.hoerscreening-wl.de.

Data protection

The examination as well as the transfer and saving of your child's data at the Screening Zentrum require your permission. The transferred data will be processed under medical supervision and confidentiality. Data protection is understood as guaranteed.

The procedures have been verified by the Data Protection Officer of the Universitätsklinikum Münster and registered at the County Procedures Register.