

Central West Infant Hearing Program

Serving families living in Halton, Peel, Waterloo,
Guelph/Wellington, Dufferin

Newborn Hearing Screening During COVID-19

Information for Parents

Like many services, newborn hearing screening by the Infant Hearing Program has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Can I still get my baby's hearing screened?

Once it is safe to do so, hearing services for infants will start again and will follow provincial and local health and safety guidelines.

Newborn hearing screening needs to take place before your baby is 8 weeks old. If your baby is more than 8 weeks of age, a Hearing Check is available.

The Hearing Check is similar to newborn hearing screening but it is designed to suit slightly older infants. The Hearing Check will identify if your baby needs a referral to audiology for more hearing testing.

If your baby has a specific risk factor for hearing loss that was identified at birth, or if he or she had the first step in screening and additional screening was recommended, you will be contacted about your baby's hearing screening.

Newborn Screening Ontario (NSO) risk factor blood spot screening continued throughout the pandemic for most babies born on or after March 26, 2020. This routine blood spot sample is checked for cytomegalovirus (cCMV) and some genetic factors that identify a higher risk for permanent hearing loss. If your baby's blood spot screen is positive for a risk factor, you will be contacted by NSO directly.

What if my baby did not have a hearing screening at birth?

ErinoakKids will contact you to offer a Hearing Check appointment. Appointments will be available at audiology clinics in the following communities: Guelph, Kitchener-Waterloo, Oakville, Mississauga, Brampton and Orangeville.

Your baby's hearing and communication skills

The main reason your baby's hearing is screened at birth is because hearing is necessary to learn how to talk. Finding out early if your baby has a hearing loss means that support can be provided as soon as possible to reduce any communication delays.

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Communication checklists

The following checklists will help you understand your child's hearing and communication development and know when to ask for help.

Speech, Language and Hearing Milestones:

Prevent, Protect, Act (SAC Speech-Language and Audiology Canada) bit.ly/2AErNSG

Look What I Can Do! A Guide to Communication Development

The First Five Years (ErinoakKids) bit.ly/HearingPDF

The Ontario Infant Hearing Program

website provides information about hearing milestones:

<http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/earlychildhood/hearing/index.aspx>

Check out the Preschool Speech and Language Program resources in your area:

- KidsAbility (Waterloo)
www.kidsability.ca/speech-language
- ErinoakKids (Halton-Peel)
www.erinoakkids.ca/Communication-CheckUp
- WeeTalk (Wellington-Dufferin)
www.wdgpulichealth.ca/your-kids/wee-talk-speech-and-language

For more information about newborn hearing screening, read the "Can Your Baby Hear?" Fact Sheet that you received when your baby was discharged from the hospital.



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For more information call 905-855-2690
(toll free 1-877-374-6625) and press 3