

# Newborn Hearing Screening: Follow-Up

## MEDICAL FACT SHEET WHAT CLINICS CAN DO TO IMPROVE FOLLOW-UP RATES

### Why parents might not return for follow-up

- Screening results were not explained well.
- The importance of follow-up evaluation was not stressed.
- Appointment was not made for baby.
- Barriers such as transportation or insurance.

### Information to share with parents

- The results of the hearing screen and their meaning.
- Hearing cannot be tested for at home - newborns with hearing loss can still startle to noises like hand clapping.
- The value of prompt follow-up hearing testing.
- Contact information for keeping the scheduled hearing follow-up appointment.

### What clinic staff should know

- Without newborn screening and timely follow-up, hearing loss often remains undetected until a child is 2 or 3 years old.
- When hearing loss goes undetected, language development is delayed.
- Babies with REFER (Did Not Pass) results need complete rescreen before 1 month of age and diagnostic testing before 3 months of age.
- Careful communication with parents is essential to ensure that parents keep their baby's follow-up appointment.

### Develop a standard protocol

- Make sure hearing results are in the infant's chart before the first visit. Obtain any missing hearing screens from the hospital before the visit.
- Encourage providers to review hearing screening results with parents.
- Verify that follow-up hearing appointment has been scheduled.
- Fax outpatient rescreening and diagnostic testing results to MDH.

### Protocols for special circumstances

- **Babies born outside of a hospital.** Be prepared to schedule 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 timely follow-up testing for hearing loss.

### Making referrals

- **Rescreening** - work with the hospital, clinic, or audiology staff to make sure babies with REFER/Did Not Pass results are seen before 1 month of age. Talk with parents about the importance of keeping follow-up appointments.
- **Diagnostic Evaluations** - Determine where you will send babies who REFER/Did Not Pass. These babies should see an audiologist and ENT who is comfortable evaluating very young children and can complete diagnosis before 3 months of age.