

Newborn Hearing Screening information for parents/guardians/Whanau

Introduction:

Congratulations on the birth of your baby! Below is information about the Canterbury District Health Boards Newborn Hearing Screening Programme.

All babies born in New Zealand are offered, in their first month of life, a newborn hearing screen. This is free of charge, irrespective of whether they are born at home or hospital.

Christchurch Women's Hospital has screening available 7 days a week and St Georges Maternity 6 days a week. The other smaller maternity units (Lincoln, Rangiora) are visited several times a week and Ashburton weekly.



Babies born at Christchurch women's hospital or one of the primary units including St Georges will be screened before going home in most cases. If you go home soon after birth from a maternity unit the screening team will contact you to ask if you would like hearing screening for your baby. If your baby has been born at home your LMC will inform us about your birth but feel free to talk to her about this.

If your baby hasn't been screened while you were in the maternity units or if your baby was born at home, an outpatient appointment will be arranged at clinics throughout Canterbury. These Clinics include: the maternity units or outpatient departments at: Lincoln, Rangiora, Burwood and Ashburton hospitals. Community clinics include Halswell, Bishopdale, Hornby, Ferrymead, Waikari, Amuri, Cheviot and Kaikoura. If you feel you will have trouble getting to a community clinic due to no transport or child care issues please contact us at the number below as we may be able to help.

Your baby will have two opportunities to be screened before it is recommended to be seen by the audiology department (hearing specialists) if they do not pass both times. The audiologist will perform a more detailed assessment of you baby's hearing and are the people who confirm if you baby has a hearing loss or not.

Each year, it is estimated that between 135 and 170 babies are born in New Zealand with mild to profound permanent congenital hearing loss. This means a birth incidence of approximately three babies with a hearing loss per 1000 births, which is within the range of international estimates. This programme has been designed to identify babies who have been born with hearing loss to be diagnosed early and then offered interventions and support for them and their families/Whanau.

The first six months of a baby's life is a critical period for learning communication. Lack of exposure to language during this time can affect a child's development, communication skills, educational and career achievements. The early detection of hearing loss, and the application of early interventions, has been demonstrated to significantly improve long-term language skills and cognitive ability.

We look forward to meeting you and your baby/Whanau and providing hearing screening.

Ph: 0800 3644262

Email: newbornhearing@cdhb.health.nz or angela.deken@cdhb.health.nz

For further information please go the National Screening Unit website: www.nsu.govt.nz