



Hearing Tests

What are the different types of hearing tests?

In order to evaluate your child's hearing, your child's physician will perform a complete medical history and physical examination. In addition, there are many different types of hearing tests that can be used to check your child's hearing. Some of them may be used on all ages, while others are based on your child's age and level of understanding.

Tympanometry (also called impedance or admittance)

A test that can be performed to help determine how the middle ear is functioning. It does not tell if the child is hearing or not, but helps to detect any changes in pressure in the middle ear. A soft plastic tip is placed over the ear canal. The machine then measures eardrum movement when the pressure changes. The test does not hurt but your child will need to be gently held in place and remain still. The test takes only a few minutes per ear.

Hearing Tests for Newborns

Evoked otoacoustic emissions (EOAE)

A test that uses a tiny, flexible earphone that is inserted into the baby's ear. Sounds are sent through the earphone. A microphone in the earphone records the otoacoustic emissions (responses) of the normal ear in reaction to the sounds. This test is painless and is usually completed within a few minutes, while the baby sleeps.

Hearing Tests for Infants and Toddlers

Behavioral audiometry

A hearing test used in infants to observe their behavior in response to certain sounds. You will hold your child on your lap during the test. The audiologist will watch for your child to respond to the sounds. Additional testing may be necessary.

Play audiometry

A test that uses an electrical machine to transmit sounds at different volumes and pitches into your child's ears. Your child usually wears some type of earphones. The toddler is asked to do something with a toy (i.e., touch a toy, move a toy) every time the sound is heard. This test relies on the cooperation of the child, which may not always be given.

Hearing Tests for Older Children

Pure tone audiometry

A test that uses an electrical machine that produces sounds at different volumes and pitches in your child's ears. The child usually wears some type of earphones. In this age group, the child is simply asked to respond in some way when the tone is heard in the earphone. Your child might raise his hand or push a button when he hears the sounds.