



Scott Harris, M.D., M.P.H.  
STATE HEALTH OFFICER

June 26, 2020

Dear Hospital Provider:

Subject: Maternal COVID-19 Diagnosis Effect on Inpatient Newborn Hearing Screening

The Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) is aware that the inpatient newborn hearing screening is delayed for some newborns whose mothers have a COVID-19 diagnosis. Because the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention considers the late identification of congenital hearing loss “a developmental emergency,” the newborn hearing screening should be completed to the safest extent possible per national, state, and hospital safety guidelines to protect all involved.

The following is recommended if the newborn hearing screening is unable to be performed inpatient due to a maternal COVID-19 diagnosis:

- Perform newborn hearing screening before hospital discharge or no later than 1 month of age.
- Notify the Alabama Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Program at (334) 206-2944 if a newborn hearing screening is not performed inpatient due to a maternal COVID-19 diagnosis.
- Schedule an outpatient hearing screening appointment prior to hospital discharge.
- Educate the family on the importance of timely follow-up (i.e., before 1 month of age for rescreening or before 3 months of age for diagnostic audiologic evaluation and provide communication developmental milestones (attached).

ADPH understands this is a challenging time and appreciates everything you do for families in Alabama. Please do not hesitate to contact us at (334) 206-2944 if you have questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Scott Harris, M.D., M.P.H.  
State Health Officer

SH/RM  
Attachments



## Unable to Screen Inpatient

### Due to Maternal COVID-19 Diagnosis

Our hospital knows that hearing screening is a very important part of monitoring the health of every newborn. Due to the current COVID-19 situation and our hospital's directive, we were unable to complete the hearing screen for your baby. Babies are learning how to communicate as soon as they are born so it is important to know about your baby's hearing early. Here is a brochure that talks about how babies develop hearing and communication skills.

Please share that the hearing screening was not completed with your baby's healthcare provider. As soon as restrictions have been removed you will be contacted about scheduling an appointment for your baby's screening. So that we may contact you, please provide your phone number and email address as well as contact information for an additional person that can help us reach you.

It is very important that you follow through for the hearing health and communication development of your child.

The Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) Program is available to answer questions and provide information about Family Support Programs. Here is the contact information for you to take with you. \_\_\_\_\_

## COVID-19

**Recommended follow up is necessary for the hearing health and communication development of your child. Below is a general guide about how babies develop.**

### Birth to 3 Months

- ◆ Reacts to loud sounds
- ◆ Calms down or smiles when spoken to
- ◆ Recognizes your voice and calms down if crying
- ◆ When feeding, starts or stops sucking in response to sound
- ◆ Coos and makes pleasure sounds
- ◆ Has a special way of crying for different needs
- ◆ Smiles when he or she sees you

### 4 to 6 Months

- ◆ Laughs
- ◆ Responds to changes in the tone of your voice
- ◆ notices toys that make sounds
- ◆ Babbles in a speech-like way and uses many different sounds, Including sounds that begin with p ,b and m
- ◆ Pays attention to music
- ◆ Follows sounds with his or her eyes
- ◆ Babbles when excited or unhappy
- ◆ Makes gurgling sounds when alone or playing with you

### 7 Months to 1 Year

- ◆ Listens when spoken to
- ◆ Turns and looks in the direction of sounds
- ◆ Enjoys playing peek-a-boo and pat-a-cake
- ◆ Understands words for common items such as "cup", "shoe", or "juice"
- ◆ Responds to requests ("Come here")
- ◆ Babbles using long and short groups of sounds ("tata", upup, bibibi")
- ◆ Babbles to get and keep attention
- ◆ Communicates using gestures such as waving or holding up arms
- ◆ Imitates different speech sounds
- ◆ Has one or two words ("Hi", "dog", "Dada," or "Mama") by first birthday

#### **Adapted from:**

[www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/your-babys-hearing-and-communicative-development-checklist](http://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/your-babys-hearing-and-communicative-development-checklist)

#### **For Further Information:**

[www.Babyhearing.org](http://www.Babyhearing.org)  
[www.healthychildren.org](http://www.healthychildren.org)  
[www.NIDCD.NIH.gov](http://www.NIDCD.NIH.gov)

#### **To Find a Pediatric Audiology Provider:**

[www.EHDIPALS.org](http://www.EHDIPALS.org)