What Happens Next?

After you are told your child has a hearing loss, you will have many questions, including wanting to know what happens next.

What can my child hear?

- The age and developmental abilities of your child will have determined how much knowledge about the hearing loss your audiologist has been able to collect.
- With very young children, the information we have is often very limited. Your Audiologist will make assumptions about the loss based upon information gained from other children with similar losses.
- As children get older, they are able to provide us with more details about their hearing. Some of this information will be obtained in the audiology clinic, other information from observations made by you and family members at home, and by staff at nursery/school.
- Your audiologist should explain in everyday language what your child can hear, and give you advice about how to make hearing easier for your child.
- You will be given an update at every appointment.

What are the treatment options?

All appropriate treatment options will be discussed with you.

- For some hearing losses, **medical or surgical treatment** may be an option. Your audiologist will make the referral to an ear, nose and throat specialist for you, if appropriate.
- For some losses, **managing your child’s listening environment** may be an option. This means being aware of the circumstances in which your child will have difficulty hearing and making sure you and others change your behaviour to make hearing easier for your child. For example, turning the television down and speaking clearly in a slightly raised voice.
- For some losses, **using hearing aids** may be an option. Hearing aids will make sounds and speech loud enough to be heard by your child. Your audiologist can discuss this in detail with you, if appropriate.
- For some losses, **a combination of the above options** may be appropriate.
Should any other referrals be made?

Children with newly diagnosed permanent hearing losses are usually discussed at the multidisciplinary team, made up of paediatric audiologists, paediatricians, ear nose and throat specialists. This team meet once a month and make recommendations about the investigations that should be considered for your child.

Referrals are most frequently sent to those mentioned below, but may include other specialties if necessary.

Your consent will be obtained **before** any referrals are made. You can discuss this with your audiologist.

- **Hearing Support Service – Visiting Teacher of the Deaf (ToD)**
  
  Your Audiologist may recommend contacting this service. They are able to provide hands-on and day-to-day advice about how to cope with the hearing loss. They are also able to provide advice and/or information to nursery and school staff when necessary.

- **Ear, Nose & Throat Specialist (ENT)**
  
  An ENT should see your child at least once, to ensure all medical considerations have been addressed. Your ENT can also arrange appropriate investigations into the cause of your child’s hearing loss.

- **Eye Specialist**
  
  An eye specialist should see your child at least once, to ensure there are no underlying vision issues. Children with a hearing loss tend to be more reliant on their vision.

- **Paediatrician (children’s doctor)**
  
  In some circumstances your audiologist may suggest a referral to a paediatrician for a general assessment of your child abilities.

- **Genetic counselling/assessment**
  
  This is usually requested if:
  
  - A family history of hearing loss seems likely, and more children are planned.
  - Your child has other difficulties that are likely to be linked to the hearing loss.
Patient Information

- **Speech and Language Therapist (SaLT)**
  Referrals to a SaLT with experience working with children who have a hearing loss can be requested from your teacher of the deaf.

**Other support:**

- **Social Services**
  A referral is not required. You can approach social services directly yourself. They can provide support and information about any financial help you or your child is entitled to.

- **National Deaf Children’s Society (NDCS)**
  Your audiologist will probably suggest you make contact with this voluntary organisation. If you have access to the Internet, the NDCS website is worth viewing.
  The information, advice and support they provide is unbiased and helpful:
  
  E-mail: [helpline@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:helpline@ndcs.org.uk)
  Website: [www.ndcs.org.uk](http://www.ndcs.org.uk)

  **Helpline** telephone: 0808 8008880

**How often will my child’s hearing be checked at audiology?**

The frequency of follow-up appointments is determined by the age of your child and the Audiology Care Plan that you have made with your Audiologist:

- Babies are usually seen in audiology at least once every three months.
- Toddlers and small children at least every six months.
- Older children and teenagers at least once a year.
- Children with hearing aids often need additional, short, intermediate appointments to ensure good hearing aid fit is maintained.
- The next planned review date will be discussed with you at the end of every appointment
- Occasionally, parental concerns arise between appointments. You simply need to contact the audiology department requesting an appointment.
Should I/we consider “Sign Language”?

- When a child has significant language difficulties due to hearing loss, using some basic “signs” makes communication easier.
- Many “signs” are identical to gestures we all regularly use, e.g., waving = goodbye. Your ToD will be able to show you some useful simple “signs” to begin with.
- Learning and using a few “signs” for everyday requests and activities, will not delay your child’s development of spoken language.
- Learning and using a few “signs” for everyday requests and activities, will reduce the frustration your child feels when trying to communicate with you.
- Your audiologist can discuss this in detail with you, and advise you whether or not this is appropriate.

To contact us:

- Telephone: 01223 217797
  or 01223 217730
- Email: audiology@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Please note: audiology staff are unable to reply to patient, parent / guardian or public emails unless a signed consent form giving informed agreement has been completed.

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We are a smoke-free site: smoking will not be allowed anywhere on the hospital site. For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS stop smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169.

Other formats:

If you would like this information in another language or audio, please contact Interpreting services on telephone: 01223 348043, or email: interpreting@addenbrookes.nhs.uk For Large Print information please contact the patient information team: patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk