

Your Child's Hearing Test

Your child has been scheduled for a hearing test at Medstar Georgetown University Hospital, in the Division of Audiology. The testing will take approximately 1 hour to complete. It may take more than one appointment to fully define a child's hearing status. Based on your child's age and activity level, one or more of the following tests will be performed:

Visit **Hear to Learn** to see video demonstrations of the tests: www.heartolearn.org/tutorials/

- **Visual inspection:** The audiologist will examine the outer ears, ear canals, and eardrums using an otoscope.
- **Objective tests:** These tests do not require a response from your child. However, since each of these tests take sensitive measurements, it is important that your child is able to be fairly still and quiet.
 - Otoacoustic emissions (OAE): Similar to a newborn hearing screening, this test uses a small eartip containing an electronic speaker and microphone. The eartip measures the response from the hair cells of the cochlea, or inner ear, to sounds that are delivered by the eartip.
 - Acoustic Immittance Testing: This test consists of both graphing how the ear drum moves in response to a change in pressure, called tympanometry, and the measuring of a middle ear muscle that contracts in response to loud sounds, called acoustic reflexes.
- **Behavioral tests:** The type of testing used will be based on your child's age and development. These tests are designed to be fun for your child, and do not cause discomfort to your child. The tests take place in a sound-treated booth, with sounds coming out of speakers, headphones, or insert earphones.
 - Visual Reinforcement Audiometry (VRA): The audiologist will look for the child to turn his/her head toward sounds or voices. A toy on the corresponding side will light up to reinforce the head movement. In between the sound presentations, the child may be engaged with toys displayed by a test assistant.
 - Conditioned Play Audiometry (CPA): The child is trained by a test assistant to perform a play task, such as placing a ball in a bucket, when he/she hears a sound or voice.
 - Standard Audiometry: The child is asked to raise a hand or give a verbal response when a sound is heard. An older child may also be asked to repeat words in order to measure his/her ability to discriminate speech sounds.

Tips for parents:

We understand that every child is unique, and we attempt to tailor the appointment to each child, while striving to obtain as much information about the hearing system as possible. If your child is able to participate in the testing with reliable results, this may reduce the need for follow-up appointments and further testing. Below are some ideas to keep in mind that may help your appointment proceed more smoothly:

- Parents and guardians are always welcome to be present during the testing. However, please keep in mind that siblings may need to wait in the waiting room; please plan accordingly. Our front desk staff cannot be responsible for supervision of your child.
- Take your child's daily patterns into account when scheduling the test. A child who is hungry, tired, or ill is less likely to give reliable information, which will necessitate additional tests.
- Plan ahead: Assure your child ahead of time that they will be playing "listening games". If possible, try to practice wearing headphones or earbuds at home.
- Bring a favorite book or silent toy. A familiar object may help keep your child quiet during the objective testing, and can be incorporated into the play portion of the behavioral testing.