

Centre for Hearing and Balance Disorders

Testing your child's hearing in theatre

Your child has been referred by the ENT (Ear, Nose and Throat) Consultant for a special diagnostic hearing test. This special diagnostic hearing test is known as Evoked Response Audiometry (ERA). It aims to measure the level of your child's hearing while they are sleeping. The ERA is often done in children who are not able to do the standard test which is performed while your child is awake. Your child will be having the special diagnostic hearing test while under a general anaesthetic (asleep) in an operating theatre.

The following information will help to prepare you and your child for the above hearing test in theatre.

Preparation and Testing

Your child may wear whatever clothing they feel most comfortable in. Parents are generally welcome to wait in the designated waiting area whilst their child is in theatre. The time your child will spend in the operating theatre can vary but is often up to 2-3 hours.

Your child's ears will be examined under a microscope by an ENT Consultant and any present earwax removed. A small hole will be made into the ear drum to assess if there is any fluid behind the ear drum. If there is any fluid present it will be sucked out using a special Hoover. Sometimes a small tube called a grommet is also placed in the hole to help prevent the fluid returning. If the ENT surgeon fits grommets, these will usually stay in place for 6 to 18 months. During this time the grommets naturally migrate out of the eardrum and fall out of the ear. It is possible that the fluid may return after the grommet has fallen out. Grommets can, on occasion, become infected or leave a tiny hole (otherwise known as a perforation) in the ear drum, however this is rare.

Once the grommet is in place the audiologist can carry out the hearing test. The hearing test will not hurt or be uncomfortable for your child. Your child's skin will be prepared by rubbing the forehead, behind each ear and the collar bone with a cleaning wipe. The same places will then be rubbed with an exfoliant gel or contact paper. This may leave a small red mark which will fade within a day or two.

The audiologist will then place some recording pads behind your child's ears, on their



Patient Information

forehead and collarbone, as well as some headphones or small soft tips in your child's ears. While some clicking sounds are played we will record on a computer how your baby's ears respond to sound whilst they are asleep.

After the hearing test

The length of the hearing test can vary. The audiologist will come and find you as soon as the test is completed to discuss the results with you. If the audiologist cannot find you then they will send a letter to you explaining the results or send you an appointment letter to discuss the results. Your child may return home on the very same day.

If you have any questions about your visit, please contact The Paediatric Audiology Team on 024 7696 6440

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please contact and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

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