Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Hearing Test Under Sedation

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Hearing Test Under Sedation

Patient Information

Children’s Audiology

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Why has my child been referred for a hearing test under sedation?

Your child has been referred for a different type of hearing test. This test may have been recommended because other types of testing have not given us as much information as we would like.

The test the Audiologists perform is called a Diagnostic Auditory Brainstem Response (ABR) test, and sometimes an Auditory Steady State Response (ASSR) test will be performed in addition to the ABR test. For an ABR test, the machine detects any kind of muscle movement or muscle tension which then interferes with the test results, so for the test to give your Audiologist the information they need, your child must lie completely still for at least one hour. This is normally best achieved under sedation.

Why does my child need this hearing test?

It is important to know if your child has a hearing loss. Often, the earlier we identify a hearing loss, the better the long-term outcomes will be for your child's speech, communication and social skills. If your child's healthcare provider is concerned about a developmental delay and feel a hearing loss may be contributing to this then it can also be very valuable to either confirm or rule out a potential hearing loss.

Things to know before my child's sedated hearing test appointment

The appointment will be on Rainbow ward at The Royal Albert Edward Infirmary Hospital. You will receive a letter from our service with the appointment time and date, along with advice regarding any food and liquids which your child can have before the appointment.

On the day of the appointment, please phone Rainbow ward to confirm that you will be coming to the appointment. You will need to check that they have a bed available for you. Very occasionally, the ward needs to cancel your appointment if there are any emergencies.

When you attend for your appointment, please bring money for the car park (payment is by card) and allow plenty of time to park.

Please bring anything which you think may be of comfort to your child, such as a favourite toy or a blanket. We would like them to be as relaxed as possible. It may be helpful to bring any snacks for parents/carers when your child is asleep.

What will happen during my child’s sedated hearing test appointment?

Once you arrive on the ward, the staff will direct you to your bed and the Audiologists are normally waiting for you. The Audiologists will introduce themselves and ask some questions about your child’s health and hearing, and then they will start to prepare for the test by gently rubbing the skin on the forehead and behind the ears with a facial scrub. They will then place little sticky tabs on your child’s forehead and behind each ear. These sticky tabs will collect the information about your child’s hearing.

The nursing staff will ask some questions about your child’s health, they will weigh your child and then the doctor will prescribe the sedation.

The appointment may last several hours, as the way the machine collects information makes the testing a slow process. Also, the staff on Rainbow ward will need to treat patients according to urgency, so if another patient is very unwell on the ward, then you may be kept waiting for the sedation medicine.

The sedation is normally given by inserting a syringe (looks like a large Calpol syringe) into the mouth. This medicine tastes very bitter. It may be helpful to practise at home with some fruit juice in a Calpol syringe to get your child used to the procedure. Sometimes the staff may recommend putting a little needle into the back of your child's hand.

Your child is often placed on a machine to monitor their heart rate and oxygen levels. Sometimes, if they are in a very deep sleep, the nursing staff may provide your child with a little bit of oxygen to help maintain healthy levels.

Once your child is asleep, parents/carers can either remain in your child's room for the duration of the test, or they may choose to wait elsewhere. There is a parents' room on Rainbow ward with hot drinks available and comfortable seating. Or parents/carers may choose to go to the hospital restaurant for refreshments.

The Audiologist should be able to give you the results of the hearing assessment on the day of the appointment.

Sometimes the sedation does not work. This can happen if your child spits out the sedation. However, the nursing staff are very experienced in administering this.

A Play Therapist may be available for your child. Play Therapists are highly trained health play specialists who can help distract your child by using play/singing/games. If you feel your child would benefit from a play therapist whilst the sedation is being administered, please either contact the Audiology Department or speak to the staff on Rainbow ward.

The sedation will gradually wear off. How quickly this happens can depend on the child, but also how much sedation they ingested. Some children will be quite groggy when they are

waking up and some children may feel a little short tempered when they are trying to wake up.

What will happen if I don’t want my child to have a sedation?

If your Audiologist is recommending a hearing test under sedation, then it is usually because we have not been able to test your child’s hearing whilst they are awake on at least two separate occasions and the Audiologist feels a reliable hearing test whilst awake is unlikely in the near future. If you would not like your child to have a sedation, please discuss it with your Audiologist. The urgency in obtaining a reliable hearing assessment can vary depending on different risk factors your child may have. Your Audiologist will discuss alternative options which may be available for your child.



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