

What is a Brain Stem Evoked Response (BSER) Test?

This is a way of checking hearing that can be used on anybody from newborns to adults.

Babies and young children need to be asleep for the test, older children must lie very still, or the test will not work.

Ideally, we recommend you arrive at the appointment with your baby / young child awake but ready for a sleep.

What exactly does it involve?

Three sticky pads (electrodes) are placed on the head, one behind each ear and one on the top of the head. These are then connected to the BSER equipment and a headphone is placed over each ear in turn so that sounds, some loud and some quiet can be played. Any response is recorded on the screen as a waveform.

The Audiologist will explain in further detail at the appointment.

Does it hurt?

No. In order for the electrodes to be attached, your child's skin needs to be prepared. The skin is rubbed with an exfoliating scrub which may feel a little uncomfortable however this will remove any surface oils and / or dead skin cells which will help obtain a clearer response.

What can I do to prepare my child for this test?

As mentioned above, the test will not work unless your child is asleep or laying very quietly.

It is important that your child arrives awake yet tired, so that they are ready to go to sleep as soon as the preparations are complete. Try not to let them fall asleep on the journey to the hospital – not always easy we know!

Please feel free to bring with you anything that you think might help your child to get to sleep. This may include a drink, (which we can warm if necessary) dummy, cuddly toy or favourite blanket etc

What happens if my child cannot sleep during the session?

We usually do succeed in getting the children to sleep even if it means a walk in the park once all preparations are complete however on some occasions we may need to bring you back for another appointment

How long will the test take?

We allow up to an hour and a half for each of these appointments. Most of the time allocated is taken up with preparation and getting the child to sleep. The test itself usually takes about half an hour.

Will I know the results straightaway?

Yes. We can usually tell you the results if they are clear. Sometimes the waveforms on the screen are not very clear and this is often because the background noise levels are too high.

All the traces are reviewed by a second Audiologist after the test is completed. If any changes are made to the results, you will be notified of these.

What happens if a hearing loss is detected from this test?

The next step would be to try to find out what is the cause of the hearing loss.

It could be a temporary problem which is likely to be caused by the presence of fluid in the middle ear, this is known as a conductive hearing loss. In these cases, we would recheck the hearing in a few months. We might ask for an opinion from an Ear, Nose and Throat Consultant.

If the results suggest a more permanent hearing problem, involving the inner ear or the hearing nerve -this is known as a sensorineural hearing loss. We would then ask you to attend an appointment with a specialist doctor in Medical Audiology.

If my child is found to have 'normal' hearing, will he/she need any further hearing checks?

The audiologist will discuss with you the best course of management for your child.

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BRAIN STEM EVOKED RESPONSE TEST

(PLEASE NOTE THAT YOUR CHILD MUST BE
ASLEEP FOR THIS TEST.)

For further advice contact:

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we do and all our work is focused
on providing them with the
best facilities, equipment and
experience possible, helping to
provide a world-class facility that
is positioned at the very forefront
of paediatric care.

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