

Once your child is asleep, the ABR test will commence. A sound is passed through the ears (either using headphones or insert earphones) and the responses through the sensors are recorded on a computer. Sometimes, a bone conductor is placed behind the ears, if more detailed testing is needed.

If your child has not slept after the second dose, we will need to stop the ABR test. We may still be able to assess their hearing using other methods such as Oto Acoustic Emissions, which is an objective test similar to the newborn hearing screen, or by behavioural methods, which may have already been tried.

The whole appointment can take up to 3 hours.

What happens after the test?

The Audiologist will discuss with you in detail about the results obtained at the appointment and an appropriate management plan. If the testing has been unsuccessful, a further plan for assessment will be discussed with you.

You do not have to wait until your child is fully awake and will be able to leave the clinic as soon as the test is complete.

This leaflet is available in audio, Braille, large print and other languages. To request a copy, please ask a member of staff.



Melatonin for Auditory Brainstem Response Test

Information for Parents and Carers



For further information or queries:

Paediatric Audiology Department on:

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Email: Paediatric.audiology@mcht.nhs.uk

Because you matter

You have been given this leaflet as your child has an appointment with us for an Auditory Brainstem Response (ABR) test, using melatonin as a natural sleep inducer. This leaflet contains information on melatonin, the testing process and what you need to do to prepare for the procedure. The Doctor would already have discussed the procedure and obtained verbal consent from you.

What is an ABR test?

It is a test of hearing where sound is passed through the ears and the electrical activity from the brain is recorded through electrodes placed on the head. It is essential for the child to be in a deep sleep for the recording to be made. This test is suggested when hearing testing by behavioural methods or observing your child's reaction to sounds, has not been possible or where a hearing loss is suspected.

What is melatonin?

Melatonin is a hormone secreted by a gland in the brain and is produced in the evening, as it gets dark which helps to bring on sleep. This hormone can be given as a tablet or capsule to restore a normal sleep-wake cycle in children and adults, where the normal sleep pattern is disturbed.

In the UK, melatonin can be prescribed by Doctors for use in children, for investigations such as ABR test, Electroencephalogram (EEG) and scans. It is also commonly used to treat sleep disorders in children with cerebral palsy, attention deficit disorder (ADD), autism, learning difficulties or visual impairment.

Are there any side effects?

Melatonin is generally well tolerated without any serious side effects. Your child may feel dizzy, nervous or may have stomach pain. Your child may develop a rash or itch. If you are concerned about any of these side-effects contact your doctor. The doctor will ensure that it is safe for your child to have the medication. Melatonin induces sleep within 30 minutes and children wake quickly from a melatonin induced sleep.

How is it given?

Melatonin is available in the form of capsules. Older children may be able to swallow them whole. The capsules can be opened and the capsule contents mixed with a small quantity of water, milk or yogurt and it is important to ensure that the whole dose of the prescribed medicine is taken. The Audiologists in clinic are not qualified to administer medications and you will be asked to give it to your child yourself, once you are in the clinic room.

What do you need to do before the appointment?

Sleep deprivation: In order for melatonin to work, it is important that your child is deprived of adequate sleep prior to the appointment. On the day of the appointment, please wake your child up a couple of hours before their usual waking time. Please ensure that they are active and that they do not nod off or nap in the pushchair or car before coming to the appointment. The more tired your child is, the better the chances are for melatonin to work and for your child to fall asleep in the clinic.

Things to bring with you: For younger children, please bring to the appointment their favourite toy, blanket, dummy or anything that usually helps your child go to sleep.

Please also bring a bottle of milk, water or juice as well as an empty bottle into which the medicine can be mixed with a small amount of the liquid. If your child prefers yogurt, please bring a pot of their favourite yogurt, an empty cup and a spoon. If your child is fed through a tube, please bring their feed, water and a syringe.

If your child goes to sleep easily in a pram or a pushchair, please bring it with you.

What happens at the appointment?

The Audiologist will answer any queries you have regarding the appointment. The Audiologist will clean the skin on your child's forehead and behind their ears. 4 sensor sticky pads will be applied to the cleaned areas. You will then be asked to give your child the medication and we will then wait for your child to fall asleep. If your child has not slept after 30 minutes, you will be asked to give them a second dose.