

## 6 BEST PRACTICES TO PROTECT YOUR BABY'S EARS

### *Precautionary measures for parents*

Parenting a child for young parents can be a promising experience. But with all the grannies and aunts by your side, this job can become slightly easy. Babies born into this world are held with utmost care and delicacy and helping it to strive into the world becomes the sole responsibility of the parents.

About 1% of the global population is affected by hearing loss issues with children ages from birth up to 6 years. The reasons are mostly due to the fact that the babies are either born with the genetic factors involved, or due to some complications at the time of birth such as prematurity, lack of oxygen supply or low birth weight. Other reason could be due to some infections such as MMR (measles, mumps and rubella), or the side effect of medicines.

But the question is, what can parents do to protect their child from developing hearing loss?

Here, I have discussed few important points that parents can do to help babies develop into healthy individuals..

### 1. **REDUCE USE OF SMARTPHONES:**



To be frank, our lives are completely dependent on the use of smart phones. Smart phone radiations have the ability to penetrate the mother's womb. This damage is apparent in the children with Down Syndrome. These radiations can cause your baby to be born prematurely and can lead to improper development of ear and high risk of ear infections after birth. A study was conducted by WHO, which suggests that the hair cells of cochlea are damaged leading to hearing loss.

#### Helpful Tip:

To help babies survive this developmental phase in the womb, mother can reduce the time limit of using the mobile phone. The radiation exposure can be limited by keeping the cell phone at a distance from the womb while using it. For communication, it is better to talk on the phone calls and keep it short than texting messages for longer time. Avoid using cell phones while charging as it increases the frequency of radiations.

#### 2. **FEEDING POSITION:**



Either breastfeeding your milk or giving formula milk to your babies, try positioning your baby in an inclined position, as this helps baby to latch the milk easily. This is because if the baby is placed in a straight or on one side of the body, that milk travels to ears causing irritation to the eardrum. In many cases, a white watery liquid is observed in the baby's ears and the baby feels

irritated and becomes cranky. This is in some cases serious condition. It is advised to consult a pediatrician immediately.

#### Helpful Tip:

While feeding milk, always keep pillow or cushion underneath his/ her head. This supports baby to feed securely. Make sure your baby doesn't side to one position. Keep an eye on the baby and bottle if there is any leakage in the bottle or if the bottle nipple is over- flowing.

### 3. AVOID COTTON SWABS:



Many mothers rely on cotton swabs for cleaning their baby's ears. Cotton swabs are dangerous for baby's ears as it triggers the ear drum. The wax is pushed to the ear drum by inserting the cotton swab and this leads to impaired hearing. In some cases bleeding occurs, which causes an alarming state for children.

#### Helpful Tip:

Instead of using cotton swabs, it is advised to keep the ears lubricated for babies by using olive oil or coconut oil. This helps the wax to come on the outer ears and the cleaning of ear wax becomes easy.

#### 4. PROTECT EARS WHILE BATHING AND SWIMMING:



Maintaining hygiene of the babies is an important task for the mothers. It is highly recommended to cover the ears of the babies while bathing and to always protect the ears from water. If water stays for a longer time in the ears, it causes irritation of the eardrum leading to the hearing loss.

##### Helpful Tip:

It is recommended to use ear plugs or covering it with a plastic hat. Mothers should also take maximum precautions while bathing and does not let water enter the ears. It is best to clean or wipe out excess water from ears after the bath with a towel. Or add oil into the ears before and after the bath. This helps repel water from entering the ears.

#### 5. NEBULIZE WHEN CATCHES FLU:





If baby catches flu, it is better to treat it immediately. The sinuses filled with mucus causes irritation of the ear drum and wax starts accumulating in the ears causing blockage of the ear drums.

**Helpful Tip:**

Babies easily catch cold and flu being extremely sensitive to the changing weather conditions. If baby catches flu, it is advisable to consult the pediatrician and nebulize baby. This helps release mucus of the sinuses and also loosens wax of the ears.

**6. VACCINATE BABY TIMELY:**



According to the CDC and WHO report, babies affected by measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) are more prone to hearing loss. Babies affected by respiratory allergies develop otitis media infection.

**Helpful Tip:**

It is advisable for all parents to timely keep a check on the vaccination of their babies. Timely immunizing the babies not only terminate the diseases but also guarantee the baby's health for a long time.