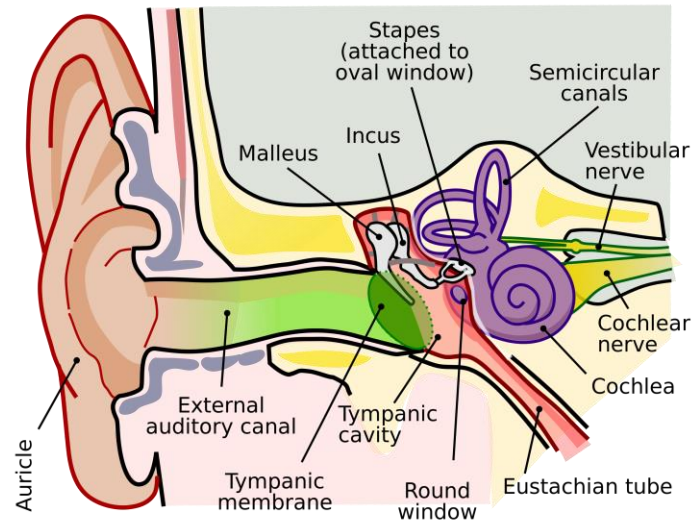


# Hearing and Speech



*Illustration from Wikipedia*

Children with a cleft palate are more likely than most children to have hearing problems during their early years due to a condition called “glue ear”.

Glue ear is caused by Eustachian tube dysfunction. The Eustachian tube connects the ear and throat and equalises pressure in the middle ear space, behind the ear drum.

If this tube doesn't open and close properly, the middle ear space can fill with liquid (known as glue ear). This can have an effect on hearing and, because of this, speech development.

**It is important that your child's hearing is checked regularly up to 5 years. There is a pathway of hearing checks for children with cleft palate.**

- New born hearing check
- Targeted hearing follow up in the community audiology service between 9 and 12 months
- If hearing difficulties are detected at 9 month check-up, further follow up will be offered by community audiology.
- Hearing assessment with cleft team audiologist at 3½ years.
- Hearing assessment with cleft team audiologist between 5 and 6 years.

If you suspect your child has a hearing difficulty in between these times and your child does not have scheduled community follow up, it is important to have their hearing checked. You should contact the Cleft Coordinator on your cleft team and s/he will guide you in arranging a hearing test.

If glue ear is detected over time, your child might be referred to the Ear, Nose and Throat department for more management - usually grommets (tubes placed in the ears to drain the fluid) - or hearing aids.