

Hearing problems



Hearing problems, also called hearing loss, occur when a person has a decrease in their ability to hear. The loss can be mild, moderate, moderately severe, severe, or profound. It can affect one or both ears and cause difficulty hearing conversations or even loud sounds.

What causes hearing loss?

- Aging
- Family history
- Diseases such as meningitis
- Prolonged exposure to loud noises



Five types of hearing problems

1. **Conductive hearing loss.** This occurs when sound waves cannot properly reach the inner ear. It may be caused by earwax buildup, infections, eardrum perforation, or problems with the tiny bones in the ear.
2. **Sensorineural hearing loss.** It is usually permanent. The inner ear or the auditory nerve cannot convert vibrations into clear signals for the brain to understand. It is the most common form of hearing loss.
3. **Sudden hearing loss.** It appears abruptly, within hours or days. The person notices that they suddenly stop hearing in one or both ears. It should be treated as an emergency, because the faster it is addressed, the greater the chances of recovering hearing.



4. **Age-related hearing loss.** It is a gradual loss of hearing that appears as people get older. It usually affects both ears and makes it difficult to hear soft sounds or understand conversations, especially in noisy places.

5. Auditory Processing Disorders (APD).

APD occurs when the brain has difficulty correctly interpreting sound, even though the ears function normally. The person hears sounds but does not clearly understand what they hear, especially in noisy environments or when someone speaks quickly. APD can develop due to head injuries, recurrent ear infections, neurological conditions, and other factors.

Consequences of Hearing Loss

Not treating hearing loss affects different aspects of life. Some of these include difficulties with communication and speech, a higher risk of dementia, and accelerated cognitive decline, among others.



Social and Emotional Aspects

For recommendations, tools, and resources on how you and your family can cope with the emotional and physical concerns that arise during and after medical treatment, please visit your primary doctor or contact the following phone lines:

Medical Advice Line 1-844-347-7801
TTY/TDD 1-844-347-7804
APS Health 787-641-9133

References:

<https://www.who.int/es/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/deafness-and-hearing-loss>
<https://harleyavm.com/five-types-of-hearing-conditions/>

Prepared by Licensed Health Educators.
 Created in May 2026.
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