



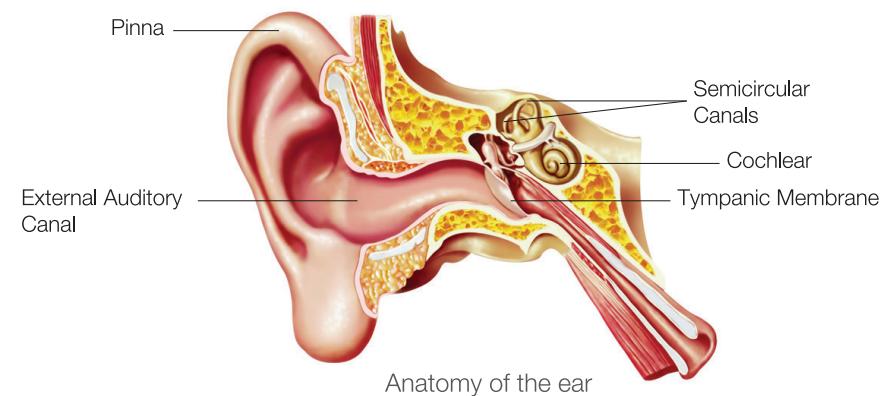
Hearing Loss



A multi-disciplinary team comprising Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT) – Head & Neck Surgery doctors, a neurologist, audiologist, rehabilitation therapist and other specialists work together to care for patients by providing useful diagnostic information, treatments, counselling and advice.

What causes hearing loss?

Common causes of hearing loss include excessive exposure to loud noise and ageing. It is common for us to turn up the volume when we use earphones on a bus or train to hear better. However, exposure to loud music for many hours a day can damage hearing permanently. Over time, you become accustomed to louder levels. If this is repeated daily, there will be permanent damage to the inner ear hair cells. Other causes of hearing loss include trauma from impact (e.g. blow to the head, accident or explosion) and ear infections.



Anatomy of the ear

What are the signs of possible hearing loss?

- You complain that people are mumbling
- You often ask people to repeat themselves
- You have trouble hearing when you are not facing the speaker, or find yourself lip-reading a lot
- People say you talk too loudly
- You cannot hear the doorbell or the telephone ringing
- Your family members complain that you turn up the volume of the television too loudly
- You experience a ringing sensation in your ears



What are the consequences?

Hearing is one of our most basic senses. It helps us to communicate with others and offers protection from danger, e.g. to hear a car horn.

Loss of hearing affects:

- Cognitive and literacy development in children
- Communication for maintenance and building of healthy relationships
- Independent day-to-day living
- Learning and employment opportunities
- Loss of confidence in hearing well and interacting with people

Individuals with hearing loss often think their situation is hopeless. As their hearing deteriorates, they may withdraw into social isolation and depression. However, with the right diagnosis and intervention, they can regain independence, confidence and have an active lifestyle again.



Our services

Our audiologists are healthcare professionals who evaluate, diagnose, treat and manage hearing loss and balance disorders. We offer specialised and personal services to individuals with hearing needs.

✚ Loss of hearing affects:

- Acoustic reflex threshold
- Ear implant candidacy assessment and implant device programming
- Hearing aid evaluation, prescription and fitting
- Pure tone audiometry
- Speech audiometry/speech tests
- Tinnitus counselling and management
- Tympanometry

✚ Pure tone audiometry

This test assesses your hearing across various frequencies. An audiologist will place a pair of headphones over your ears to test each ear individually. In some cases, the audiologist will place a bone conductor behind your ear to send tiny vibrations to the inner ear. This gives your doctor additional information on your hearing condition to help in the diagnosis.

✚ Tympanometry

This is usually done to test the condition of the eardrum, the middle ear bones and the eustachian tube. It involves putting a small amount of air pressure into the ear canal. Tympanometry helps to diagnose different types of hearing loss.

What are the treatments for permanent hearing loss?

For people with sensorineural hearing loss, the condition is permanent. This is because once the sensitive hair cells in the cochlea are damaged, they cannot be repaired. However, most sensorineural hearing loss can be treated with hearing aids, assistive listening devices, and hearing rehabilitation. These treatments can improve your quality of life.

✚ Hearing aids

This is an electroacoustic device which is designed to amplify sound for the user. The aim is to make speech more intelligible and to improve impaired hearing.

✚ Implantable devices

Consult an audiologist who specialises in diagnosing hearing loss and helping patients to manage their condition. Depending on the severity of your hearing loss, lifestyle, listening needs at home and at work, leisure activities, style preference and expectations, the audiologist can provide you with the necessary information to choose a suitable hearing aid. He/she will also let you try the appropriate hearing aids and answer your queries. Your condition and preference are important considerations when choosing the style and features of your hearing aid.

✚ Assistive listening devices (ALDs)

ALDs are designed to improve communication for people with hearing loss and may be used with or without hearing aids or implants. Examples of ALDs are visual indicators and alarms, FM systems, vibro-tactile devices, and telephone connectivity devices.

✚ Hearing rehabilitation

This is the process of providing training and treatment to improve a patient's hearing. Rehabilitation services focus on teaching patients to adjust to hearing loss, make the best of hearing aids, explore ALDs, manage daily conversations and background noises, etc.

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