



## Hearing Loss: Key Facts

### Facts on Hearing Impairment:

People who are hearing or deaf can view deafness from different perspectives. The pathological perspective sees deafness as a disability that should be treated medically, aiming to "normalize" deaf individuals. On the other hand, the cultural perspective values deafness as an identity, though it doesn't necessarily oppose medical assistance.

The World Health Organization reports that one out of every three people over 65 years old—about 165 million people worldwide—experience hearing loss, making it the world's second most common health issue.

### What is the definition of hearing Impaired?

Legally, a hearing impairment refers to individuals with significant hearing loss who cannot hear loud speech or common everyday sounds. A person is classified as deaf when they have little or no ability to hear.

Effective communication requires effort from everyone involved in a conversation. Even when someone with hearing loss uses hearing aids and practices active listening, it is important for others to consistently apply good communication strategies, such as:

- Always face the person with hearing impairment directly, at eye level, and in well-lit conditions when possible. Make sure the light shines on your face rather than into the listener's eyes.
- Speak plainly, slowly, and clearly, but keep your delivery natural—avoid shouting or exaggerating mouth movements, as shouting can distort speech and make lip reading harder.

Hearing loss increases with age and often goes unnoticed. Even with hearing aids, many have trouble following short comments. Speak clearly at a suitable volume for the room and avoid side conversations during meetings. For larger groups, use a portable microphone to improve participation—especially for those joining via Zoom, who rely on the microphone to hear the speaker.

## **What to Expect During a Hearing Test**

Admitting hearing loss can be challenging. If you notice muffled conversations or often ask people to repeat themselves, scheduling a hearing test is a strong first step toward improvement.

## **Feeling Comfortable with Your Hearing Care Provider**

It's important to feel at ease with your hearing care provider. When you're comfortable, you're more likely to come back for regular checkups and talk openly about any issues or concerns. Establishing trust with your provider is key to achieving lasting results.

## **A Comprehensive Intake Process**

Choose a provider who thoroughly assesses your medical history, lifestyle, and hearing issues. They should review your form, ask specific follow-ups, and seek to fully understand your needs for customised care.

## **Otосcopy: Examining the Ear**

During a hearing test, your provider uses an otoscope to check for earwax, eardrum holes, and signs of infection or abnormalities. Some may show you images of your ear canal and eardrum so you can follow your care.

## **The Hearing Assessment**

The hearing assessment usually consists of:

**Pure-Tone Testing:** Wearing headphones, you respond when you hear tones at different pitches and volumes to measure frequency range.

**Speech Testing:** You repeat words or sentences, sometimes in noisy settings, to gauge speech understanding.

**Bone Conduction Testing:** A device behind your ear checks inner ear function, bypassing the outer and middle ear.

**Tympanometry:** This test measures middle ear pressure and performance.

## **Understanding Your Test Results**

After testing, your provider will explain the results and clarify the reasons behind your hearing difficulties.

## **Exploring Hearing Aid Options**

If you need hearing aids, your provider will suggest choices based on your hearing loss, dexterity, and lifestyle. Hearing aids are available in basic, standard, advanced,

and premium levels. Your provider should explain each type's pros and cons, pricing, government funding availability, and financing options, as these can differ by clinic.

### **Warranties and Policies**

Check for three-year warranties with loss and damage coverage and confirm return policies and restocking fees. Check for clinics with a 90-day trial period.

### **Follow-Up Care**

After choosing hearing aids, ongoing care matters. Look for clinics that provide:

- Regular follow-ups for adjustments
- Clear return policies
- Support as you adapt to your hearing aids

### **The Importance of Comfort**

Your comfort with both the provider and process is crucial. Feeling supported helps ensure you use your hearing aids and get the most benefit.