

Hearing Loss

Hearing loss is a sudden or gradual decrease in being able to hear. There are different types of hearing loss:

- **Conductive Hearing Loss:** Sound is blocked. This is often caused by earwax build up.
- **Sensorineural Hearing Loss:** A nerve problem prevents proper hearing. This is often caused by aging.
- **Mixed Hearing Loss:** Hearing loss where both the conductive and sensorineural systems are affected.

Causes

- Aging
- Loud noise exposure
- Blockage
- Ear infection
- Certain medicines
- Ear and head injury
- Some illnesses
- Born with an ear problem
- Family members with hearing loss

Signs

- Sounds are muffled.
- High pitched sounds are hard to hear.
- Words are difficult to understand when there is background noise.
- You ask others to repeat, or speak more slowly, clearly or loudly.
- You speak more loudly than other people.
- You avoid conversations or social events.

- You turn up the volume on the TV or radio.
- You have dizziness, and ringing or buzzing in your ears.

Your Care

Tests will be done to find the cause of your hearing loss and measure how well you can hear. Your doctor will check your outer, middle and inner ear.

Depending on the cause of your hearing loss, your treatment may include:

- Removal of ear wax
- Medicines
- Hearing aides
- Listening devices such as headphones or flashing lights or vibrators for doorbells or phones
- Surgery
- Therapy to help with your speech and hearing

Preventing Hearing Loss

- Protect your ears from loud noises. Wear earplugs when working with machines or around loud noises.
- Avoid loud noises such as music, motorcycles or snowmobiles.
- Have your hearing tested.

Talk to your doctor or nurse if you have any questions or concerns.