

When should you suspect hearing loss?

Your **child** may have hearing loss if he or she:

- doesn't respond to sounds
- cannot understand what you say properly
- has delayed or improper speech development
- has discharge from the ear
- suffers repeated episodes of pain in or blockage of the ear



As **an adult**, you may have a hearing loss if:

- you often ask people to repeat themselves
- you tend to raise the volume of the radio or television
- you regularly miss parts of conversations
- you have a ringing sensation in the ear (tinnitus)
- people tell you that you speak loudly



Over 466 million people live with disabling hearing loss. It is predicted that **by 2050 nearly one in ten people will have hearing loss.**

Hearing loss can be prevented and its impact reduced.

WHO/NMH/NVI/18.7

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For more details refer to:

www.who.int/deafness/world-hearing-day/whd-2018/en



World Health Organization

World Health Organization
whopbd@who.int



World Health Organization

HEARING LOSS: How to prevent it and to reduce its impact



What is hearing loss?

A person who is not able to hear as well as someone with normal hearing is said to have hearing loss. It can vary in severity. A person with **mild hearing loss** may find it difficult to understand conversations in noisy places such as a restaurant. Someone with **moderate hearing loss** has difficulty understanding regular conversations unless voices are raised. Others who have **severe hearing loss** are unable to hear even very loud sounds close to their ears.

What causes hearing loss?

1

Among newborns:

- Family history
- Infections suffered by the mother during pregnancy
- Premature birth
- Lack of oxygen at the time of birth
- Severe jaundice soon after birth

2

Among children and adults:

- Infections such as meningitis, measles, mumps or ear infections with discharge
- Use of certain medicines
- Injury to the head or ear
- Exposure to loud sounds in any setting
- Listening through personal audio devices at unsafe levels
- Wax or foreign bodies blocking the ear canal

3

Among older people:

- Normal ageing process
- Exposure to loud sounds in any setting
- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Use of certain medicines

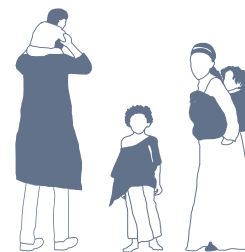


What can you do to avoid hearing loss?



As an individual:

- Do not insert any object into the ear
- Use earplugs and earmuffs in noisy places
- In case of any ear problems, consult a doctor immediately
- Check if medicines you take can affect your hearing
- Have your hearing tested regularly
- If advised to do so, use a hearing device as indicated



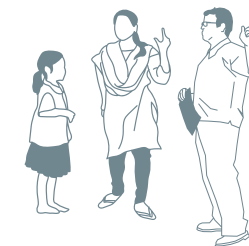
As a child carer:

- Do not insert anything into a child's ear for any reason including to clean it
- Teach children never to insert anything into their ears
- Take your child to see a doctor in case the child complains of pain or blockage or has discharge coming from the ear
- Do not allow children to swim in dirty water
- Do not hit or slap a child
- Protect children's ears from loud sounds
- Teach children to listen safely through personal audio devices



As a community worker:

- Learn about hearing loss and share information on ear and hearing care
- Know where ear care services are provided and guide people on how to access them
- Refer to a doctor people reporting with ear pain or discharge
- Learn about hearing devices and help people to use them properly
- Encourage deaf people to use sign language and organize support groups



As a teacher:

- If a child is inattentive in class, it could indicate hearing loss; consider suggesting a hearing test
- Educate children on ear care and on the risks of inserting objects in the ear and of listening to loud sounds, including music
- Respect children: hitting a child or slapping him might result in hearing loss
- Refer the child to a doctor immediately in case of discharge or pain in the ear