



Managing hearing loss

Ear and hearing health is important for our wellbeing and quality of life. There are different types of hearing loss, ranging from mild to profound.

Some people are born with hearing loss. The most common causes of hearing loss are due to ageing and being exposed to loud noise over a long period.

In Australia, about 3.6 million people have some level of hearing loss. Around one third of cases are preventable.

The impacts of untreated hearing loss

From the age of 50, there is a marked increase in rates of hearing loss compared to other age groups. Some people with hearing loss may delay or not seek treatment for a range of reasons. Untreated hearing loss and ear disease can have a big impact on the lives of children and adults.

Hearing loss can:

- affect social and emotional wellbeing, including a higher risk of low self-esteem, memory loss and depression
- affect a person's ability to get an education and find work
- lead to social isolation.

For children it can also:

- affect a child's ability to listen, learn and talk
- result in lower school attendance.



Booking a hearing test

Acquired hearing loss often happens gradually, making it difficult to identify at first. Having a hearing test helps to detect the early signs of hearing loss and can help maintain a healthy level of hearing for longer.

- A hearing test checks how well you can hear different sounds and is performed by a professional such as an audiologist or audiometrist. They will tell you if you have hearing loss, what type of hearing loss you have and how severe it is.
- You can talk to a GP about your hearing or book an appointment with a hearing clinic – you don't need a referral. To find a hearing clinic near you, you can use the healthdirect Service Finder at healthdirect.gov.au/australian-health-services
- You can also do the National Acoustic Laboratories online test at knowyournoise.nal.gov.au if you're not sure whether you're experiencing hearing loss.

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If you have a hearing loss, there are a range of management and treatment options that may help, including:

- adopting some simple communication strategies
- assistive listening devices such as personal amplifiers and headphones
- phone apps, such as instant translator apps that can convert natural speech to text in real time
- hearing aids – a small electronic device that makes sounds louder
- cochlear implants – an option for people with severe hearing loss which involves surgery in the inner ear and using an external sound processor to send sound signals directly to the brain.

Subsidised hearing services

Support is available to eligible people who have hearing loss.

This includes free or subsidised hearing services and devices, specific services for children and support to help people translate spoken language. More information on support available can be found at health.gov.au/hearing.

Book a hearing check, talk to a health professional, or visit health.gov.au/hearing for more information.