

RECOGNIZING AND MANAGING HEARING LOSS

INFORMATION FOR OLDER ADULTS, FAMILIES,
AND CAREGIVERS



READ THIS PAMPHLET TO LEARN:

- What Age-Related Hearing Loss is.
- What Causes Hearing Loss.
- How You Can Help Manage Hearing Loss.



**Sinai
Health**

Healthy Ageing
and Geriatrics

WHAT IS AGE-RELATED HEARING LOSS?

Age-related hearing loss is the gradual decrease in how well you can hear. Hearing loss happens over time and is a common condition that affects older adults.



Ageing is the number one cause of hearing loss. If left untreated, hearing loss can cause:

- Social isolation or feelings of depression, anxiety and stress.
- An increased risk of cognitive decline.
- A greater risk of falling.

HEARING LOSS FACTS:

3RD

MOST COMMON CHRONIC CONDITION IN OLDER ADULTS.

70%

OF OLDER ADULTS AGED 85 AND OVER REPORT A PROBLEM WITH HEARING.

90%

OF THOSE AFFECTED BY HEARING LOSS CAN IMPROVE COMMUNICATION BY USING A PROPERLY FITTED HEARING AID, COUNSELLING, OR ENVIRONMENT CHANGES.

FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO AGE-RELATED HEARING LOSS

- Noise-induced hearing loss is caused by long-term exposure to sounds that are too loud.
- Conditions that are more common in older adults such as high blood pressure or diabetes.
- Certain medications can affect the sensory cells in your ears such as antibiotics or certain types of chemotherapy drugs.
- Changes in how the brain processes speech and sound.



SIGNS OF HEARING LOSS

Hearing loss often goes unnoticed because it happens gradually.

Some common signs of hearing loss include:

- Frequently asking for words to be repeated
- Misunderstanding conversations, especially in noisy environments
- Speaking louder than necessary
- Favouring one ear
- Thinking people are mumbling
- Turning the television or radio up louder than usual
- Having difficulty hearing on the telephone
- Withdrawing from social contact
- Ringing or buzzing in one or both ears
- Appearing disinterested or slow to respond



COMMUNICATION TIPS FOR HEARING LOSS

Improving two-way communication between the talker and the listener will help you or your loved one stay active in social situations.



Prepare the Environment

If you or your loved one is experiencing hearing loss, make sure the environment is comfortable for speaking and listening.



Noise

- Reduce any background noise.



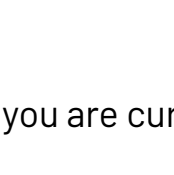
Lighting

- Converse in a well-lit room.



Distance

- Sit or stand close to the other person.



Angle

- Face the other person. Do not sit on an angle or with your back to them.

If you are currently experiencing hearing loss, try the following:



Hearing Aid(s)

- Use your hearing aid(s) or other assistive device(s) to obtain maximum benefit.



Glasses

- If you wear glasses, have them with you at all times. Visual cues gained from speech reading, facial expressions, and gestures are helpful.



Asking Questions

- Always ask questions to clarify the part of the message you didn't understand.

If your friend or loved one is experiencing hearing loss, keep the following in mind during conversations:

Speed

- Avoid talking too fast or too slow and take pauses to make sure you are understood before moving on.



Volume

- Speak in a normal or slightly loud voice – do not shout or whisper.
- Avoid shouting or exaggerating mouth movements.



Visibility

- Keep your hands away from your mouth if speaking.
- Face the person directly and keep eye contact.



Attention

- Say the person's name before starting a conversation.
- Do not talk from another room as it is difficult for someone hard of hearing to understand what is said.
- Be patient and be prepared to write things down if necessary.

HEARING AID OPTIONS

There are 4 basic styles of hearing aids. Styles of hearing aids differ by size, placement on or inside of the ear, and how they amplify sound.



BEHIND-THE-EAR (BTE)

Behind-the-Ear (BTE) consists of a hard plastic case worn behind the ear which is connected to a tip that fits inside the ear canal. Sound travels from the hearing aid through a thin tube and into the ear.



RECEIVER-IN-CANAL (RIC)

Receiver-In-Canal (RIC) hearing instruments are worn behind the ear connected by a wire to a receiver that sits directly in the ear canal. RIC hearing aids are used for mild to severe hearing losses.



IN-THE-EAR (ITE)

In-The-Ear (ITE) hearing aids fit completely inside the outer ear and are used for mild to severe hearing loss. The case holding the electronic components is made of hard plastic and is custom molded to the person's ear.



IN-THE-CANAL (ITC)

In-The-Canal (ITC) aids fit into the ear canal and are available in two styles. The In-The-Canal (ITC) hearing aid is made to fit the size and shape of a person's ear canal. A Completely-In-Canal (CIC) hearing aid is nearly hidden in the ear canal. Both types are used for mild to moderately severe hearing loss.

HEARING AID CONSIDERATIONS

HEARING AID EVALUATION:

It is important to speak with your health care provider about hearing aids or changes in your hearing. They may refer you to an audiologist. Audiologists can provide further information on hearing aids and treatment options for those affected by hearing loss.

SIZES AND TYPES OF HEARING AIDS:

Audiologists can also help make recommendations on the size and type of hearing aid that may work best for you or your loved one. Depending on the type of hearing loss and your needs, an audiologist may recommend a specific style.

PRICE:

All hearing aids have different prices. The Ontario Assistive Devices Program (ADP) grant contributes towards the cost of hearing aids. Application information can be found in the Suggested Resources section of this pamphlet.

INTERFACE:

All hearing aids are now digital, and many can interface wirelessly with cell phones, televisions or computers.

OTHER OPTIONS

PERSONAL HEARING AMPLIFIERS:

A personal hearing amplifier (such as a Pocketalker) uses a microphone and headphones allowing an individual to hear more clearly. Personal amplifiers are used for one-on-one conversations or small group settings.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

CANADIAN HEARING SOCIETY (CHS)

The Canadian Hearing Society (CHS) provides information, services, and products to help advance hearing health for those who are culturally deaf, orally deaf, deafened or hard of hearing.



www.chs.ca



Phone Toll Free: 1-877-347-3427

TTY Toll Free: 1-877-216-7310

CANADIAN HARD OF HEARING ASSOCIATION (CHHA)

This Canada-wide organization provides information about hard of hearing issues and solutions. CHHA aims to increase public awareness of hearing loss.



www.chha.ca

THE HEARING FOUNDATION

The Hearing Foundation is a national organization focused on research, public education programs, and advocacy for hearing health. Visit their website for more information on hearing loss and other types of hearing problems.



www.hearingfoundation.ca



Toll-free: 1-866-HEAR-YOU (1-866-432-7968)

ONTARIO ASSISTIVE DEVICES PROGRAMS (ADP)

The Assistive Devices Program (ADP) covers over 8,000 separate pieces of equipment, supplies, and aids. The program intends to increase independence through access to assistive devices that are responsive to an individual's needs. Visit ADP's website for eligibility and application information.



www.health.gov.on.ca/en/public/programs/adp



Toronto 416-327-8804

Toll-free 1-800-268-6021

TDD/TTY 416-327-4282

RELEVANT RESOURCES IN OUR SERIES

- Funding for Mobility and Other Aids from the Assistive Devices Program
- Living Longer, Living Well: Your Guide to Healthy Ageing

ADDITIONAL HEALTH RESOURCES IN OUR SERIES:

- Advance Care Planning: How to Start the Conversation
- Alcohol and Your Health
- Calcium, Vitamin D and Bone Health
- General Tips for Memory Problems
- Improving Nutrition as You Age
- Improving Urinary Incontinence
- Managing Caregiver Stress
- Managing Chronic Pain
- Managing Common Mental Health Conditions in Older Adults
- Managing Constipation
- Managing Mild Cognitive Impairment, Alzheimer's Disease And Other Dementias
- Managing Multiple Chronic Health Conditions
- Managing Sedative-Hypnotic Use Among Older Adults
- Managing Sleep in Older Adults
- Managing Substance Use and Addictive Disorders As You Age
- Preventing Falls at Home
- Recognizing and Managing Anxiety
- Recognizing and Managing Delirium
- Recognizing and Managing Depression
- Safe Medication Use for Older Adults
- Substitute Decision Makers and Powers of Attorney
- Understanding Your Palliative Care Options

ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY RESOURCES IN OUR SERIES:

- Community Transportation Options
- Driving Assessment Services
- Elder Abuse
- Housing Options for Older Adults
- How to Register for Wheel-Trans
- Meals on Wheels

Visit www.sinaigeriatrics.ca/healtheducation for additional resources for older adults, families and caregivers.

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