

FACT SHEET



Approximately 10% of the general population, 20% of those over 65 and 40% of those over 75 have a significant hearing problem. At least 80% of the elderly in nursing homes have impaired hearing. Hearing loss is the third most prevalent chronic disability among older adults, superseded only by arthritis and hypertension. Both the incidence and prevalence of hearing loss increases with age. Hearing loss can start as early as the third or fourth decade of life. Hearing loss occurs gradually and can often go unnoticed.

The Human Ear: consists of three main parts: the outer ear, the middle ear, and the inner ear. From the inner ear the auditory nerve conducts information to the brain with sound being translated into meaning along the pathway. This is called auditory processing.

Three Types of Hearing Disorders:

- **Conductive Hearing Problem:**
 - Occurs in the outer and middle ear
 - Commonly caused by wax or fluid build up
 - Generally temporary and is usually medically treatable
- **Sensorineural Hearing Problem:**
 - 90% of people with hearing impairments fall into this category
 - Occurs as a result of deterioration of the inner ear and/ or auditory nerve and is often referred to as “nerve deafness”
 - Commonly caused by the natural aging process, excessive exposure to noise, head trauma and hereditary factors
 - Usually permanent but can often be assisted with a hearing aid
- **Central Hearing Problem:**
 - Associated with disorders of the auditory centres in the brain
 - Usually permanent but can often be assisted with auditory technical devices
 - One of the symptoms is difficulty in recognition of language with or without hearing loss

Warning Signs of a Hearing Disorder:

- Speech and other sounds seem faint and are often muffled
- Difficulty in understanding someone speaking from a distance
- Difficulty conversing in areas with noisy backgrounds
- Speech and other sounds seem distorted, slurred or lack clarity
- Difficulty in understanding speech even though it may be clear enough



Early detection is vital! If you suspect a problem consult your yellow pages or visit our website to find a speech-language pathologist or audiologist near you.

www.caslpa.ca