

Fast Facts

Hearing Loss

-Ear has three major parts—outer, middle and inner

Process of Hearing: Sound wave pass through your outer ear and cause vibrations at your eardrum (tympanic membrane). The eardrum and three small bones of your middle ear help to amplify the sound wave vibrations as they travel to your inner ear. The vibrations reach the cochlea (fluid-filled snail-shaped structure that has thousands of tiny hairs attached to nerve cells). It is here that the sound vibrations are translated into electrical signals that are transmitted to the brain. Due to the vibrations of different sounds affecting the tiny hairs differently, the nerve cells send different signals to your brain. This is what allows you to tell the difference between different sounds.

Hearing Loss: As you age, it is normal to have wear and tear on the inner ear. This is especially true if you are exposed to loud noises. This is the most common type of permanent hearing loss, presbycusis. It affects about 25% of people between the ages of 55 – 64 and about 50% of people over the age of 65. Some other types hearing loss are temporary and can be caused by excessive earwax build up that causes a blockage, ear infections and trauma to the eardrum from sticking things too far in your ear (it is possible to rupture your eardrum).

<i>Symptoms</i>	<i>Treatment</i>	<i>Prevention</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Muffling of speech/sounds -Difficulty understanding words, particularly consonants, especially in noising environments -Frequently asking others to speak more slowly, clearly or loudly -Unable to hear the television or radio resulting in turning the volume up -Withdrawing from conversations -Avoiding social settings due embarrassment or frustration with inability to hear 	<p><i>Temporary:</i> fix cause (removing excessive wax, surgery to repair injuries or tubes to allow for fluid drainage to prevent infections)</p> <p><i>Permanent:</i> hearing loss can't not be restored, so help the person hear better by using devices, such as hearing aids or cochlear implants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Wear hearing protection -Don't play music too loudly, especially when wearing headphones -Wear specially designed ear protection when working in an area that has loud machines -Have your hearing tested frequently

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