



Okay, I Think I May Have A Hearing Loss. Now What?

The first course of action is to call an Audiologist (preferably us!) and schedule a hearing evaluation. The Audiologist will take a thorough case history to get some background information on the difficulties you are experiencing and to help determine possible causes for your hearing loss. This information also helps the Audiologist when it comes time to making recommendations and discussing treatment options with you. The hearing evaluation consists of obtaining your hearing thresholds. A threshold is the softest sound you can hear, at least half the time. The Audiologist will do this by having you sit in a large, sound-treated booth. Using ear inserts, she will present tones at various pitches and you are asked to respond by pushing a button anytime you hear the tone. She will continue to do this until she has established your thresholds at 250 Hz (a low pitch or bass sound) through 8000 Hz (a high pitch or treble sound). She will repeat this process using a bone oscillator, which is placed behind your ear, to determine where the hearing loss is taking place. If the problem is found to be in the outer ear or the middle ear, the hearing loss is considered to be *conductive*. A conductive hearing loss can be temporary and can often be treated with medication or surgery but there are situations where medical treatment is not an option or at least not the best option. If the hearing loss is taking place in the inner ear or the auditory nerve, it is said to be *sensorineural*. Sensorineural hearing losses are permanent and usually not medically treatable. Hearing aids are often the best treatment option for this type of hearing loss and may be the best option for some types of conductive losses. To help determine if hearing aids will help you, the Audiologist will also do word recognition testing.

The hearing evaluation is covered by most health insurance plans. Testing is painless, safe and completely necessary to establish a true measure of your hearing sensitivity. Based on the hearing evaluation and the case history, the Audiologist will discuss treatment options with you. A referral to your physician or an Ear, Nose and Throat Specialist is given if there is any indication of a medical condition. Treatment options may also include discussing which hearing aids would work best for you and why. The hearing evaluation is only one part of the process. Communicating your needs and expectations is very important. We usually allow an hour to an hour and a half for the initial appointment to allow ample time for discussion following the evaluation. Bringing a friend or family member is always helpful and is encouraged.



Compliments of: Patriot Center for Hearing Loss, LLC
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