

# Hearing loss as you age

## **Hearing loss is common**

As a person grows older, they may not hear so well. About half of people over the age of 60 have trouble with their hearing.

Hearing loss might start earlier if a person's health isn't good, if they've worked in loud noise or if they've had many ear infections.

About 1 out of every 10 Australians say they have a hearing loss.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people it can be as high as 7 out of every 10 adults.

Sometimes people don't realise they have a hearing loss.

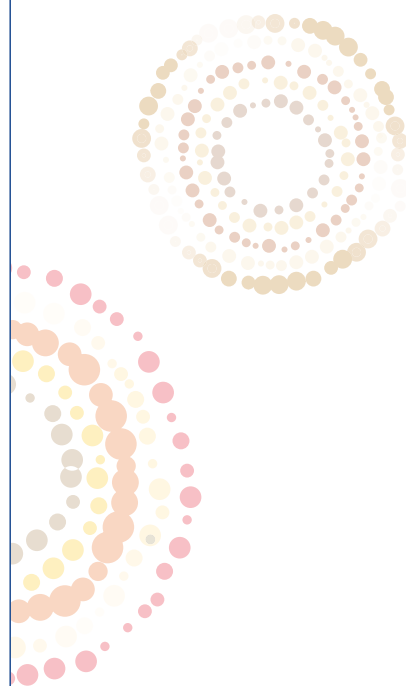
Often hearing changes slowly and the person adjusts to it. They might get around the problem by watching faces and gestures or by avoiding places where it's hard to hear.

They might say their hearing is fine, and blame others - "people mumble these days". Friends or family might notice the hearing loss before the person does.

Usually a person doesn't do anything about it until it is a nuisance to them.

## **People with hearing loss might have these problems:**

- They can understand what you're saying if it's quiet but not if it's noisy.
- They can understand what you're saying if you are close, but not if you're in the next room.
- They may miss-hear some words or think you're talking about something completely different.
- They might have 'tinnitus' (buzzing or ringing noises in the ears or head). Some people get used to this and don't notice it; other people can be troubled by it.



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## ***“Why don’t they do something about it?”***

Sometimes family and friends get annoyed about the person’s hearing. The person might be slow to do something about it, and say things like...

- “My hearing isn’t bad enough.”
- “I can hear when I want to”
- “A hearing aid would be a nuisance.”
- “People will think I’m old if I wear a hearing aid.”
- “I won’t be able to manage it.”

If the person with the hearing loss is pushed into getting a hearing aid, they often don’t wear it. People have more success with a hearing aid when they want to use one and decide they will stick with it.

## ***What should I expect from a hearing aid?***

Hearing aids sound clearer and more natural and are smaller than they used to be.

For most people, voices will sound louder and clearer and listening should become easier again - but it’s not quite as natural as having normal hearing, especially when listening in background noise. Some people with very damaged hearing may hear more loudly but not very clearly with a hearing aid.

A hearing aid should be comfortable to wear – most people forget they are wearing one. The person should choose one with controls that are easy to use.

## ***What can be done?***

See a Doctor - they can check whether any medical treatment could improve hearing.

Next, an Audiologist can do a hearing test. If there is a hearing loss, the Audiologist will talk about what can be done to help.

## ***How Australian Hearing can help***

**Australian Hearing** provides Government subsidised services and the latest digital hearing aids for eligible people. For full details of our eligibility criteria visit [www.hearing.com.au](http://www.hearing.com.au) or contact your nearest hearing centre on **131 797**.

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**Australian Hearing** provides the best hearing care, the latest in hearing aid technology and leads the world in hearing research.