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Patient information for Children with Hearing Loss

Who is this information for?

This information is for patients, families and carers following a diagnosis of hearing loss in a child.

What is hearing loss?

A hearing loss may be conductive, sensorineural or mixed. It may be sudden or gradual in onset. The hearing loss may be temporary or permanent. A hearing loss causes limited awareness of sound and difficulty with speech understanding, the degree to which this happens will vary with each child, depending on their hearing loss.

What are the signs that my child may have a hearing loss?

- Language may develop normally and then appear to be delayed.
- The average age for the first two words is often within normal limits, but the first 2-word utterances may be delayed.
- Your child may have difficulty with background noise and therefore may have difficulty localising sound sources.
- Your child may be experiencing educational difficulties at school.
- Your child may appear inattentive, disinterested and aloof.
- Language development may be affected.
- Your child may have difficulty hearing whispers and soft voices, low level environmental sounds and may miss certain speech sounds.

How do I know if my child has a hearing loss?

- Hearing loss is usually determined by a diagnostic audiometric assessment in consultation with an audiologist .

How can I help my child if they have been diagnosed with hearing loss?

- Try and make eye contact when speaking to your child.
- Tap your child on the shoulder to get his/her attention before speaking to him/her. Try not to yell at your child to get their attention.
- Help your child to localise the sound if he or she is having difficulties.
- Look for cues that your child understands what you are saying.
- Raise your voice slightly and face him/her when you are at a greater distance.
- Make the home more listening-friendly. Try to reduce things that make unnecessary noise. Use carpeting and cloth curtains. Use cork boards instead of magnetic boards. Replace buzzing fluorescent lights. Operate noisy appliances when you child is not home or is asleep.
- If your child has hearing loss in one ear, always be aware of where his/her normal ear is facing. It should always be facing you or those talking to him/her.
- Do not have the television or radio on while eating dinner or at other times when you are talking to your child.
- Create a quiet listening environment while your child is watching television.
- Do not give your child instructions from another room. He or she will likely hear your voice, but not understand what you are saying.
- If your child wears a hearing aid, make sure that it is functioning at all times. Hearing aids that do not work are much worse than no hearing aids at all.
- Teach your child's siblings and teacher things that you have learnt about helping him or her.

Concerns or questions?

You can contact your ENT Specialist at the Melbourne ENT Group (MEG):

- Phone: 1300- 952-808
- Email: admin@melbentgroup.com.au
- Website: www.melbentgroup.com.au



Your regular Audiologist is also an excellent resource and source of support and further adjustment/consultation

Your GP is also the best contact for ongoing care and concerns.

Further information

The Vicdeaf Rehabilitation Team runs regular courses to help people manage their hearing loss. The attendance of family and friends is also welcomed. These courses are held in various locations. For further details, please contact Vicdeaf on (03) 9473 1111 or by:

www.vicdeaf.com.au



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