

Patient information on devices available for people with hearing impairment

Who is this information for?

This information is for patients, families and carers following a discussion regarding hearing loss and devices available to assist hearing.

What hearing difficulties can I have even with hearing aids?

- Even when hearing aids are used successfully, it is common for people to experience difficulties with the telephone, television or hearing an alarm bell.
- There are a range of devices available that can be used with or without hearing aids in order to manage hearing loss.

What devices are available to assist with hearing impairment?

- **Telephone devices** are available which have volume control or the ability to telephone typewrite, including:
 - **Telstra standard rental phone:** this phone has the ability to adjust the ring volume, making the alarm bell louder, and a volume control for amplifying the incoming call signal. This phone has an in-built hearing aid coupler that can be used with the “T” switch of a hearing aid.
 - **Alternative telephone alarms:** Telstra has an alternative general purpose alarm with variable volume, tone and pitch controls. It can be placed anywhere around the home or workplace. A visual signal alert is also available which converts the sound of a telephone ring bell into a flashing light. Such devices are available through the Telstra Disability Equipment Program. The contact details for this service are: phone **1800 068 424**; TTY – **1800 808 0981**; fax **1800 814 777**; or website <http://www.telstra.com.au/abouttelstra/commitments/disability-services/disability-equipment-program/>
 - **Portable acoustic amplifiers for the telephone:** ranges are available for people with mild to moderate hearing loss who do not use a hearing aid, and for people who have a more severe hearing loss and use a hearing aid.
 - **Digital mobile phones:** special mobile phone attachments have been developed (called T-link) to help solve the interference problems experienced by some people with hearing aids when they use digital mobile phones. The device can be attached to most models of mobile phones and is used with the “T” switch of a hearing aid. Music links are also available which plug into CD players/iPods and other audio output devices with a 3.5mm output jack. Bluetooth technology is available for people to use mobile phones using wireless transmission.
 - **Devices to convert the telephone signal into a visual form:** devices are available for people with a severe/profound hearing loss, which send and receive written information

through the telephone system. The messages are presented on a small visual display screen. They are known as “Telephone Typewriters” or TTYs. There are a number of models available; some also provide a printed copy of incoming and outgoing messages. A TTY message can only be received by another TTY. TTYs can be rented through the Telstra Disability Scheme on 1800 068 424.

- The Commonwealth Government funds a **National Relay Service** that relays phone calls between deaf people, those with a hearing impairment and/or speech impairment and the wider community. The National Relay Service numbers are: voice 1800 555 660; TTY 1800 555 630; and fax 1800 555 690.
- **Television Devices** can be used when a group of individuals in a room want to hear a TV at different volumes. Some devices can be used without a hearing aid and some devices are used together with a hearing aid.
 - **Headphones or earphones with volume control:** these plug directly into the earphone socket of the TV. This can eliminate the main speakers, but many TV sets now have another switch or socket that will enable the main speakers to continue to operate.
 - **Cordless infrared devices:** these consist of an infrared transmitter which is attached to the TV, DVD player or radio. You wear a small infrared receiver in the form of headphones. Various infrared devices can be purchased to transmit sound directly into your ears or via a small loop which interacts with your hearing aid/s.
 - **Captions for TV programs:** captions (subtitles) can be accessed via Teletext TV or a digital set top box. The National Captioning Hotline can be contacted on 1800 777 801 or via their website www.auscap.com.au.
 - **Induction loops:** these attach to the TV or radio and transmit a signal that can be received by hearing aids with a “T” switch. The induction loop can be placed in a variety of places. A neck loop can be worn around your neck and plugged into the headphone socket of the TV. Background noise is eliminated because the microphone on your hearing aid has been bypassed. In some cases hearing aids are set up by the audiologist in TM mode which is a combination of telecoil and microphone.
- **Alarm clocks:** an alternative to a normal alarm clock bell may include a clock with a louder bell, a flashing light, a vibrator pad, or a combination of the above.
- **Door alarms:** different types are available, depending on the type and degree of hearing loss that you have, as many have different pitches. There are also devices that cause lights to flash when the doorbell is rung. A remote control doorbell that enables you to plug the door bell into a power socket in whichever room you are in is also available.
- **Smoke detectors:** wireless smoke alarms that transmit to a variety of receivers such as a flashing light, adjustable volume receivers and vibrating pads are available.

- **Baby cry alarms:** these devices pick up the sound of a baby crying and convert it into a flashing light or vibrating alarm signal which can be placed wherever it is most convenient for it to be easily seen or felt.

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

www.auscap.com.au



Scan this QR code with your smartphone camera to automatically visit website

 1300 952 808  (03) 9429 3627

 [MELBENTGROUP.COM.AU](https://www.melbentgroup.com.au)

 G2/173 LENNOX STREET, RICHMOND VIC 3121

ABN 88 181 798 030