

Hearing loss in adults: assessment and management

Information for the public

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Hearing loss: the care you should expect

Hearing loss is a common condition, affecting about 9 million people in England. It usually happens gradually as people get older and is most common in people over 65. Hearing difficulties can happen at any age and have a number of different causes. People often put off getting help for hearing loss. Yet it can have a major impact on their quality of life, causing them to lose confidence and feel isolated from family and friends. It can also lead to depression and anxiety. We want this guideline to make a difference to people with hearing loss by making sure:

- any difficulties you have with your hearing are picked up early and acted on
- you are offered a hearing test as soon as you, your carer or doctor have concerns about your hearing
- you are able to get the right type of care, information and support for your hearing loss
- people who need medical care for their hearing loss are referred to the right service and seen quickly when needed.

Making decisions together

Decisions about treatment and care are best when they are made together. Your doctor or audiologist (hearing specialist) should give you clear information, talk with you about your options and listen carefully to your views and concerns.

To help you make decisions, think about:

- What matters most to you – what do you want to get out of any treatment?
- What are you most worried about – are there risks or downsides to the different options for managing your hearing loss that worry you more than others?

If you can't understand the information you are given, tell your audiologist or doctor.

Read more about [making decisions about your care](#).

Where can I find out more?

[NHS Choices](#) has more information about hearing loss.

The organisations below can give you more advice and support.

- [Action on Hearing Loss](#), telephone 0808 808 0123, textphone 0808 808 9000
- [C2Hear online](#), telephone 0115 8232600
- [Hearing Link](#), telephone 0300 111 1113, SMS 07526 123255
- [Sense](#), telephone or textphone 0300 330 9256

NICE is not responsible for the content of these websites.

To share an experience of care you have received, contact your local [Healthwatch](#).

We wrote this guideline with people who have been affected by hearing loss and staff who treat and support them. All the decisions are based on the best research available.

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