

How common is hearing loss?

Hearing loss is the second most common disability in the Australian community. It can occur at any age. Some people are born with impaired hearing. In others, it can occur suddenly as a result of illness or accident. More commonly, it progresses slowly and in early stages is often unrecognised.

How important is hearing?

Hearing is essential for acquiring and maintaining normal speech, receiving an education, earning a living and maintaining relationships with family, friends and workmates. Being able to communicate is fundamental to our self-confidence, self-esteem and enjoyment of life. Everyday communication for a hearing-impaired person requires mental, physical and emotional effort.

SHHH is here to help

Hearing loss is a very common problem. A hearing impairment can be very distressing to the individual, couple, family, friends, carers and workmates. There is so much that can be done however, to help people manage their hearing loss. With technology, communication strategies and coping skills, communicating can be so much easier and more enjoyable.

What's SHHH

SHHH Australia Inc. is a voluntary, non-profit, educational organisation dedicated to helping Australians with hearing loss. We give information and advice to hearing-impaired people and their families, while promoting community understanding about hearing loss. We believe that knowledge is essential to becoming a successful consumer. As our name suggests, our aim is to assist hearing-impaired people to make informed decisions about their own best hearing management.

Become a SHHH member

SHHH is a voluntary non-profit organisation which receives no on-going government funding. It finances itself by membership fees, donations and small charges for some services. We believe the work we are doing is vital for hearing-impaired people and their families, but we cannot do it alone. You can support us by becoming a SHHH member, which will help to ensure that the services, information and support that we provide to hearing-impaired people can continue. Membership includes subscription to the Hearing Matters journal.

Contact Details for SHHH Australia Inc. Self-Help for Hard-of-Hearing People

Turrumurra SHHH Information Centre

Open Tuesday, Thursday,
Friday 10am to 3pm
Hillview Community
Health Centre
1334 Pacific Highway,
Turrumurra, 2074
Telephone (02) 9144 7586
Facsimile (02) 9144 3936
Website www.shhhaust.org
Email shhh@netspace.net.au

Canterbury SHHH Information Centre

Open Mondays 10am to 3pm
Canterbury Hospital
Allied Health Department,
Room B3.340
Campsie 2194
Telephone (02) 9787 1088
Email shhhcanterbury@netspace.net.au

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Hearing Loss?

We can help

SHHH

Self-Help for Hard-of-
-Hearing People

How SHHH can help

- SHHH publishes a quarterly journal, Hearing Matters, which deals with all aspects of hearing loss – to inform, inspire and keep you up-to-date. It also acts as a forum for debate on issues about hearing loss and serves as an advocate for hearing-impaired people. The journal is sent to all members.
- SHHH operates hearing information centres, which provide information on services and support organisations for hearing-impaired people and demonstrate assistive listening devices for TV and radio, adapted telephones, alarms and other communication aids. SHHH does not sell equipment, but will provide contact details for obtaining the selected device. No appointment is necessary and our service is free.
- SHHH has a website at www.shhhaust.org which contains topical information about hearing loss. There are printable information sheets on a variety of subjects and articles from our magazine that readers found particularly helpful or inspiring. The website is updated regularly.
- SHHH runs a hearing aid bank in conjunction with Macquarie University where second-hand hearing aids are recycled and offered to low income earners and Centrelink health care card holders.
- SHHH acts as an advocate to government, industry and other organisations, to make them more aware of issues concerning hearing loss. Some volunteers serve on committees to represent hearing-impaired people.
- SHHH groups give hearing-impaired people and their families the opportunity to meet other people with hearing loss. Group members exchange ideas and information in an educational and supportive environment.
- SHHH has an outreach program, with speakers available for both community and professional groups on request.

Managing hearing impairment

Hearing loss varies in degree from mild to moderate to profound. Similarly, it impacts differently on each individual so, in consultation with your professional advisers, individually appropriate management decisions need to be made. At any age, communication strategies, coping skills and technology will help. Technologies may include:

Hearing aids

A hearing aid is an individual amplifying system. After hearing assessment and discussion, the most appropriate hearing aid will be selected, in consultation with the dispensing professional. For many hearing-impaired people, a well-fitted hearing aid (or pair of aids) is an essential tool in the ability to cope in everyday situations.

Cochlear implants

Some people, with a severe to profound hearing loss, may benefit from a cochlear implant. It is a surgically implanted device and, unlike a hearing aid, does not make sounds louder. Instead, it bypasses the damaged hair cells with an array of electrodes surgically placed inside the inner ear. The electrodes allow direct stimulation of the hearing nerve. Today, cochlear implant surgery is considered routine and is appropriate for any age group. There are more than 100,000 Australians over 50 years of age who might benefit from a cochlear implant. Your audiologist can advise whether you may be a potential cochlear implant candidate.



Listening with a cochlear implant and a hearing aid

Many people are now benefiting from wearing a cochlear implant on one ear and a hearing aid on the other. This is called bimodal hearing, and is particularly helpful for managing hearing losses that are moderate-to-profound in degree or worse. Bimodal hearing can make the most of residual hearing and of available hearing technology, for those who struggle to manage with hearing aids alone.

Assistive listening devices

In addition to and sometimes separately from a hearing aid or cochlear implant, an assistive listening device can add significant benefits to hearing-impaired people. At SHHH resource centres you can try these devices and find out where they can be purchased.

A symbol you should know about

This international symbol means “Hearing Help”. It is used to inform hearing-impaired people that an assistive listening system such as an induction loop, FM, or infra-red system is installed in a public venue. It may also be used to alert others to the need to take care in communicating, for example, with hearing-impaired patients in hospital. It cannot be used to promote commercial interests.

