

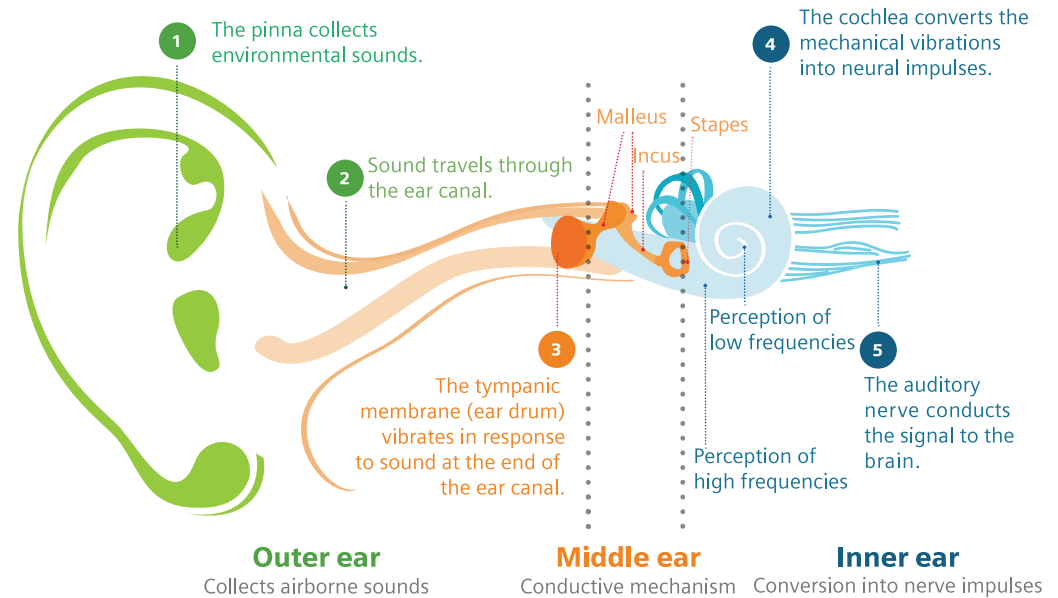


Audiology - Hearing Care **Torbay and South Devon**

Before you receive your hearing aid

How our ears work

Our ears are divided into three sections, the outer ear, middle ear and inner ear (see diagram opposite).

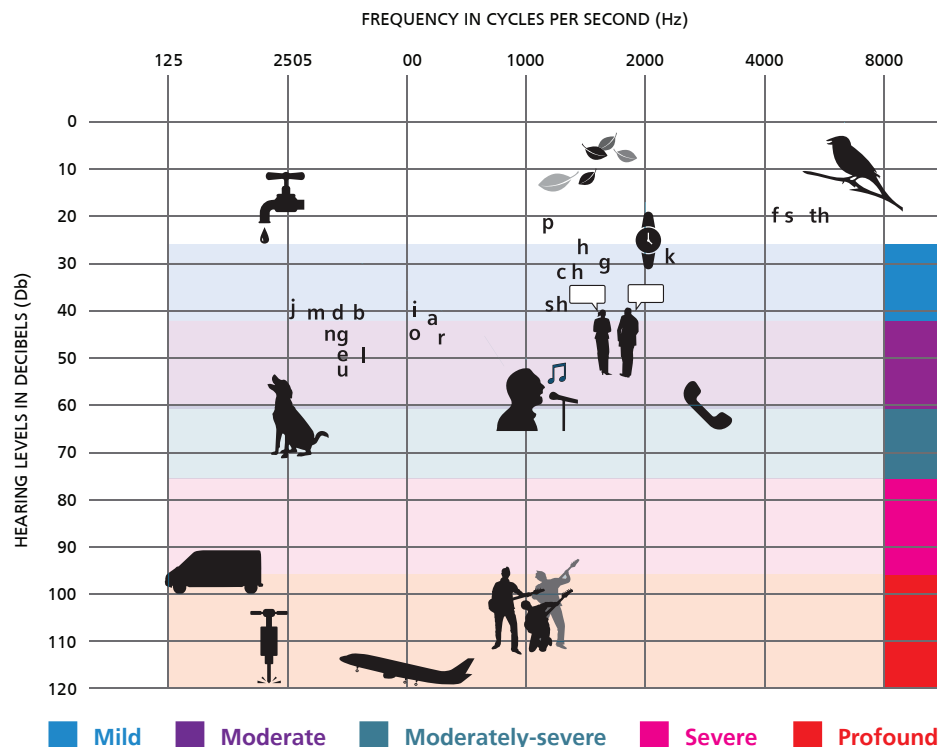


When something in our environment makes a sound this creates changes in pressure known as sound waves. When these sound waves reach our ears they are directed into the ear canal. The sound waves travel to the eardrum and cause it to vibrate. These vibrations are transmitted across the middle ear by three small bones called the malleus, incus and stapes. These bones increase the strength of the vibrations and pass them into the cochlea of the inner ear.

The cochlea of the inner ear is filled with fluid and contains thousands of tiny hair cells. The vibrations from the bones in the middle ear cause movement in the fluid. This causes the hair cells to bend. The movement of the hair cells creates a small electrical charge. These charges travel along the auditory nerve to the brain which recognises them as sound.

For an ear to be functioning properly, every stage in this pathway needs to be working. Hearing loss happens when at least one part of this system is not working as it should.

What type of hearing loss do you have?



Type of loss:

Conductive hearing loss

This means that there is a problem in the outer/middle ear which is preventing sound from being transmitted to the inner ear.

Sensorineural hearing loss

This means that there is a problem with the inner ear (cochlea) or the nerve pathways from the ear. This type of hearing loss is often caused by damage to the hair cells within the cochlea.

Mixed hearing loss

A mixed hearing loss means that there is a problem with both the outer/middle ear and the inner ear (the cochlea).

What type of hearing loss do you have?



Your fitting appointment will last approximately 45

minutes to an hour. Please feel free to bring a family member or a friend with you. The hearing aid that you will receive is based on digital technology and will be programmed on the day to match the results of your hearing test.

The first thing your Audiologist will do is measure up your earpiece. A test will follow called Real Ear Measurements (REMs). This helps us to measure the sound levels reaching your eardrum, so that we can set up your hearing aid to account for the unique way your ear canal amplifies sound.

A thin soft tube will be placed into your ear canal. This may tickle as it goes in, but your Audiologist will make sure that you are comfortable throughout the test. You will then hear some sounds coming from a speaker in front of you. You do not need to respond to these sounds. All you need to do throughout the test, is to sit quietly and as still as possible while the Audiologist sets up your hearing aid.

Please note: it is important that your ears are clear of wax before this appointment.

As soon as your hearing aids are programmed and switched on, you should notice a difference. It will sound loud and probably quite strange at first. This is normal so do not worry. Your Audiologist will make sure that the sound is clear and comfortable and will explain everything you need to know before you leave. If you need glasses for reading please bring these with you.

If you have any concerns or queries before your next appointment please feel free to contact the Audiology department on: (01803) 656325

What to expect from your hearing aid

What will a hearing aid do for me?

Your hearing aid will amplify some of the sounds that you are missing out on so that you can hear more clearly. A hearing aid is only an aid to your existing hearing and it has its limitations. It will not restore your hearing back to normal, but it should help you in some of the situations that you are struggling to hear in.

How does a hearing aid work?

All hearing aids have a built in microphone that picks up sound and converts it into an electrical signal. This signal is processed electronically and converted back into sounds for you to hear. The sound that you will hear should be clear and comfortable, and tailored to your particular hearing loss.

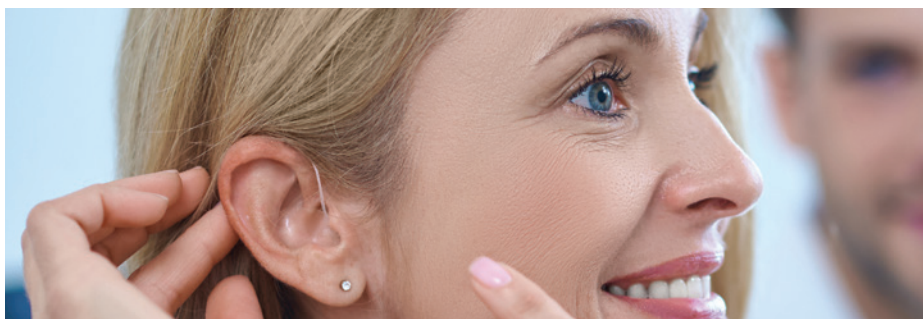
How long will it take before I get used to wearing hearing aids?

As with anything in life, it takes time to get used to something new. While you are getting used to your hearing aid you will need to gradually build up the amount of time you wear it, by starting in a quiet place where there is no background noise. At first you may find everything sounding unusually loud. Your own voice may sound strange and echoey, and you will probably find that you are very aware of sounds that you have not heard for a long time (such as kettles boiling and paper rustling). This is quite normal. It is important to remember that you will not get the full benefit from a hearing aid straight away. The signals from the hearing aid will be reaching an area of your brain which has not heard sounds for a very long time. It will take time for your brain to adapt and to get used to these sounds. But the more you wear your hearing aid and persevere, the more natural these sounds will become.



One hearing aid or two?

In most situations we would recommend wearing two hearing aids. There are a number of advantages to this including improved hearing in groups and noisy places and being able to tell where sound is coming from better. However not everyone is suitable for two hearing aids and your audiologist will advise you on this. If you have chosen just to go for one we can always fit you up with a second hearing aid at a later date.



Hearing aids and living well

Hearing loss can cause communication difficulties which in turn may lead to people withdrawing from social situations and becoming more isolated. This in turn may influence one's mental health and may reduce quality of life.

Research has shown that a mild hearing loss can cause changes to how our brain is organised which can impact on our speech perception. It also indicates that even a mild hearing loss can increase the effort it takes to listen. Research suggests that wearing appropriate hearing aids may improve cognitive function and improve speech in noise perception.

There is a lot of information about dementia and hearing loss but the connection between dementia and hearing loss is not fully understood. Research has shown there is an association between hearing loss and cognitive decline but this does not mean that having a hearing loss will cause dementia. Furthermore, there is no evidence that wearing hearing aids will reduce the risk of dementia. Dementia has many different factors that include high blood pressure, physical inactivity and social isolation to name a few.

Whilst wearing hearing aid will not prevent dementia, looking after your hearing health can ease listening and keep you more socially engaged which allows people to live better.

Communication tips

Hearing Aids unfortunately cannot be the answer to all our communication problems. Communication with others relies as much on what we see as it does on what we hear. By using hearing aids and adopting some of the communication tips below, you may find everyday conversations a lot easier.

If you are hard of hearing:

- Try to sit or stand at the same level and not too far away from the speaker.
- Tell the speaker that you have a hearing loss before you start a conversation
- Ask them to speak clearly and slowly, but without shouting.
- Ask the speaker to sit or stand facing the light.
- Do not feel embarrassed to ask for things to be repeated or rephrased.
- Watch the speaker's face and lips. Facial expressions and gestures will tell you a lot about what is being said. If you are interested in joining a lip reading course please ask the department for details.
- Try to reduce unnecessary background noise such as the TV/radio.

If you are speaking to someone who is hard of hearing:

- Be patient and understanding.
- When speaking, try to face the light.
- Make sure you have the person's attention before you start speaking.
- Don't talk to the person from behind.
- Speak clearly, not too slowly and use normal lip movements, facial expressions and gestures.
- If you notice that someone has not understood, then try rephrasing what you have said.
- Keep your voice at a comfortable volume. Shouting can appear aggressive and may cause discomfort.

FAQs

Who will I see at my appointment: Your appointment letter will show you who you will be seeing at your next appointment. Our NHS Audiologists are fully trained, qualified professionals, not salespeople.

How often would I need to be seen? Once you have been fitted with your hearing aid(s) you will be followed-up, either over the phone or face to face. This will be approximately two months after the hearing aids have been fitted. You will also need to contact us approximately every 6 months for regular servicing of the aid and it's parts. Once you have been fitted with your hearing aid a reassessment is generally recommended every 3 years. However if you are managing with your hearing aid you can leave this longer.

Where can I be seen? Audiology clinics run at the following local hospitals. To make appointments at any one of our clinics, contact the **main audiology centre in Torbay on (01803) 656325** and request your preferred clinic.

Torbay Hospital

Lowes Bridge, Torquay

Newton Abbot Hospital

West Golds Road, Jetty Marsh,
Newton Abbot

Dawlish Hospital

Barton Terrace, Dawlish

Totnes Community Hospital

Coronation Road, Totnes

Dartmouth Clinic

Zion Place, Dartmouth

Teignmouth Hospital

Mill Lane,
Teignmouth

Brixham Hospital

Greenswood Road, Brixham

Paignton Hospital

Church Street, Paignton

Where can I get replacement batteries? Batteries can be supplied by the hospital and clinics noted above. Additionally, your local GP practice may be able to offer batteries. A full list of GP surgeries that can give you batteries will be given to you at your hearing aid fitting appointment.

How often will I need to see a consultant? You might have been referred to the Audiology department by the Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) department. Sometimes ENT will continue to see you as well as seeing us in Audiology. The ENT team will guide you as to further appointments with them.



Contacts

Audiology Torbay Hospital

Outpatients level 2

Lowes Bridge

Torquay

TQ2 7AA

Tel: (01803) 656325

Or email us at:

tsdft.audiology@nhs.net

You have the choice of the following locations:

Torbay Hospital

Lowes Bridge, Torquay

Dartmouth Clinic

Zion Place, Dartmouth

Newton Abbot Hospital

West Golds Road, Jetty Marsh,
Newton Abbot

Teignmouth Hospital

Mill Lane,
Teignmouth

Dawlish Hospital

Barton Terrace, Dawlish

Brixham Hospital

Greenswood Road, Brixham

Totnes Community Hospital

Coronation Road, Totnes

Paignton Hospital

Church Street, Paignton

Web:

www.torbayandsouthdevon.nhs.uk/services/audiology



Email: dlcustomerservices.uk@wsa.com

Website: www.stretta-hearing.com

WSA Wonderful
Sound for All