

## PATIENT INFORMATION

# Unilateral Hearing Loss in Children

**What is unilateral hearing loss?**

This is when the hearing in one ear is normal but the hearing in the other is not. It is sometimes called single-sided deafness. It can range from a mild hearing loss to a profound hearing loss in the affected ear.

**How will this affect my child?**

The good news is that most children with this sort of hearing loss manage very well. Speech and language normally develop in the normal way.

**What difficulties might my child have?**

Most children with unilateral hearing loss normally cope very well and naturally learn to make the best use of their good ear. However, it is possible that they *could* have difficulty with the following:

- Hearing faint or distant speech
- Knowing where sounds are coming from (they will always appear to come from the better hearing side)
- Hearing speech when the poor ear is towards the speaker
- Hearing speech when the surroundings are noisy
- Unilateral deafness makes it difficult for a child to tell which direction traffic is coming from, so it's important to teach your child to take extra care when crossing the road.

**How can they make the best use of the hearing at school?**

It might be best that he/she:

- Sits in class so that the better ear is towards the teacher
- Moves for group work when possible to maximise use of better hearing ear
- Sits with a clear view of the teachers face
- When possible sits with the poor ear towards a wall and the good ear towards the class

## **Why do we have to keep coming back to the hospital for more hearing tests?**

It is important that your child's hearing is checked on a regular basis so that we can be sure that the better hearing ear remains good.

Glue ear is a common childhood condition that could cause the hearing in the good ear to be temporarily poor.

If you or your child notices a change in hearing levels between visits please phone us to arrange an appointment.

## **Can my child have a hearing aid to improve their hearing?**

It is possible that a hearing aid might be helpful but it does depend on the level of hearing in the worse ear. Please speak to the audiologist next time you are in the department and the options will be explained.

## **How can my child protect the good hearing that they have?**

Listening to loud sounds over a period of time can damage hearing. It is particularly important for your child to know this and not risk damage to the hearing in the better ear.

Encourage careful use of earphones/headphones – a useful rule of thumb is that if other people can hear their music it is dangerously loud.

Always follow health and safety guidelines when involved in noisy occupations or leisure pursuits. Use ear protectors as advised!

Avoid exposing your child to cigarette smoke as this has a recognised link to glue ear.

Useful websites

[www.ndcs.org.uk](http://www.ndcs.org.uk)

[www.dontlosethemusic.com](http://www.dontlosethemusic.com)

With thanks to Sheffield Children's Hospital

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For further assistance or to receive this information in a different format, please contact the department which created this leaflet.