



Independent Hearing Care Services

Hearability information sheet

PRESBYACUSIS (AGE-RELATED HEARING LOSS)

What is presbyAcusis ?

Presbycusis means age-related hearing loss (derived from two Greek words – presbus meaning 'old man' and acusis meaning 'hearing').

Presbycusis describes the type of hearing loss due to the ageing process. This is caused by the gradual deterioration of the hair cells in the cochlea, the part of your ear which processes sound.

For most people with presbycusis, it is the high-frequency sounds that become more difficult. This means that heard speech will become unclear and you may have trouble understanding what people are saying.

Who might suffer from it?

The main cause of this condition is natural ageing, but other factors can also influence it, such as:

- genetic influences
- diet
- environmental noise. It has been noted that people who live in a noisy environment suffer from age-related hearing loss more than those who live in quieter surroundings.

One person in seven has a hearing loss.

One person in two at the age of 60 has a hearing loss.

Do you ...

- * turn up the TV or radio higher than the normal level?
- * sometimes have difficulty on the telephone?
- * complain that other people mutter or mumble?
- * have difficulty following conversation in groups or noisy situations?
- * tilt one ear towards the speaker?

If you answered yes to any of the above questions, then you may have a hearing loss.

I've noticed my hearing isn't what it was. What should I do?

You should make an appointment to see your GP or contact a local Hearing aid company, who may refer you to see an ear specialist and should undertake a full examination of your hearing and conduct a hearing test.

You will usually be referred to an audiologist. They may suggest a hearing aid.

It is important for new hearing aid wearers to be persistent, as it does take time to get used to wearing them. Many people find hearing aids to be of great benefit. Currently, wearing a hearing aid is the only solution for age-related hearing loss.

How might hearing loss affect my life?

Often people feel left out and isolated when they have a hearing loss. Hearability recommends that you attend a local lipreading class. You will also meet other in the same situation, and can find support and advice. Information on local classes should be available from your library or Social Services.

Finally, please remember that hearing loss is more common than you realize, and there is always help and support available. Contact Hearability for further information.

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