

Recognising and Understanding Hearing Loss

- Do people seem to mumble when they speak to you?
- Do they complain that your television is too loud?
- Do you get strange looks when you answer to what you thought you heard?



**1 in 6 Australians
have a hearing Loss**

This statistic is expected to rise to 1 in 4 by the year 2050.



**1 in 3 people over 50
have a hearing Loss**



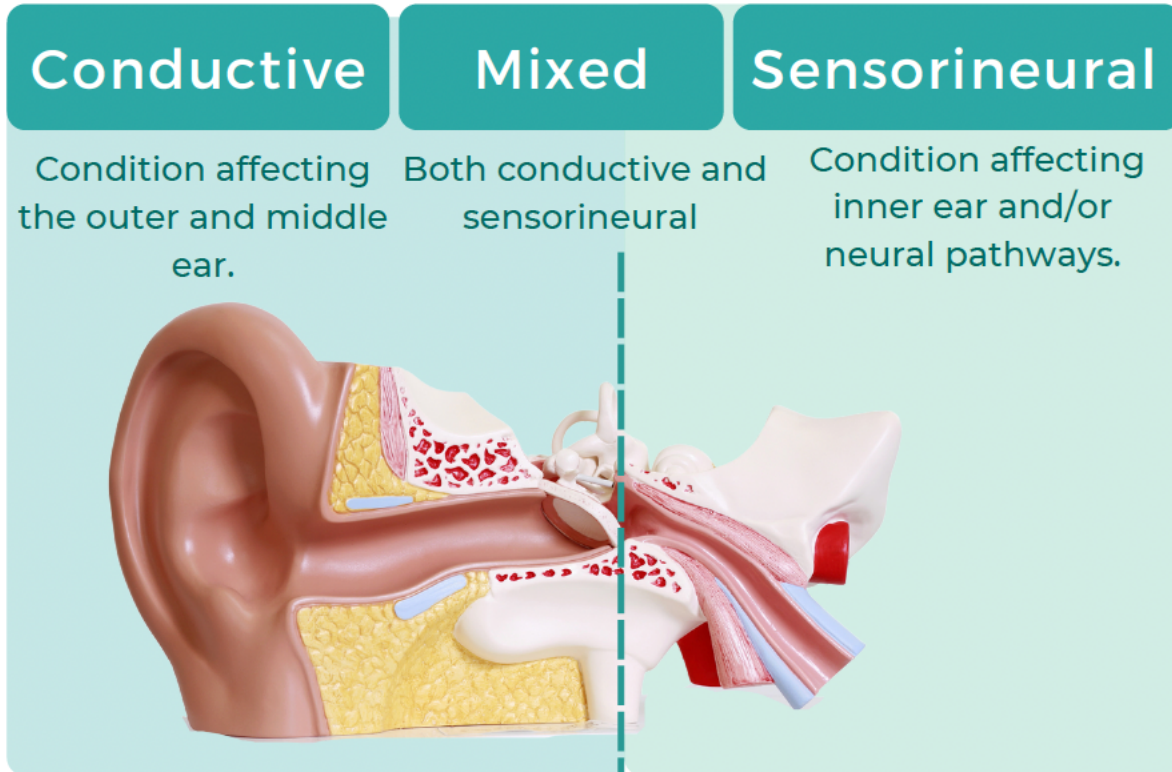
**1 in 2 people over 60
have a hearing Loss**

Hearing loss is reported almost as often as arthritis, which is the most common disorder in Australia. So, if you have difficulty hearing, you are not alone!

The good news is that there are positive steps that can be taken to manage your hearing loss. Hearing Matters Australia (HMA) is here to support you and address the challenges of living with hearing loss

Hearing loss can have many causes, these include but are not limited to: family history, age, disease, history of noise exposure, wax buildup, medications, or even a head injury. A hearing loss can be temporary or it can be permanent.

There are 3 main types of hearing loss detailed below:



What are the symptoms of hearing loss?

The first signs of hearing loss can be hard to notice because they usually come on gradually. They might include:

- having trouble hearing in noisy places
- having trouble hearing people on the phone or if they're not facing you
- often asking people to repeat themselves
- hearing sounds as muffled, as though people are mumbling
- needing to have the TV up louder than other people
- often missing your phone or the doorbell ringing
- hearing buzzing or ringing in your ears
- avoiding situations because you have trouble hearing

Deterioration of hearing, in most cases, is slow and it may be a number of years before the person with the hearing loss realises how much their hearing has changed. The television volume may have crept gradually up and up. The number of missed or misunderstood words may increase. Social situations may become too tiring and difficult. It is easy to become withdrawn, isolated and lonely as a result of difficulty hearing.

Can I prevent hearing loss?

Most types of hearing loss are permanent, so it's important to prevent hearing loss before it occurs. If you do have damage to your hearing, you can still try to stop it from getting worse.

The best way to protect your hearing is to limit your exposure to loud noises. That means both loud noises on individual occasions, and over the course of your lifetime.

An event or activity is too loud and can damage your hearing if afterwards you hear ringing in your ears, your ears feel full or sounds seem softer.

Tips to prevent damage to your hearing:

- Keep your music, TV and radio down — you should be able to easily understand someone talking one metre away.
- If you use headphones or earphones, keep the volume down. It shouldn't be loud enough for someone next to you to hear.
- Wear earplugs or ear protection equipment, such as earmuffs, in noisy workplaces and for noisy activities, such as mowing the lawn.
- Take breaks from loud environments if you can.
- If you can, use headphones or earphones that block background noise.
- At clubs, live music events and other loud places, wear earplugs. Take frequent breaks and stand further away from the speakers.

Workplaces have rules about noise levels. If you work in a noisy environment, you should have access to ear protection. If not, speak to your workplace's occupational health and safety officer.

You can use **Know Your Noise's** [online risk calculator](https://knowyournoise.nal.gov.au/noise-risk-calculator) (<https://knowyournoise.nal.gov.au/noise-risk-calculator>) to work out if you are exposed to too much noise.

Support Guides are shared by HMA as a service to members and those in the community who have an interest in hearing loss. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information provided, however HMA accepts no responsibility for any adverse consequences arising from the contents of these sheets. HMA information sheets are for personal use only. Downloads and printing allowable for whole sheets. Contact HMA with queries or amendments.

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