



HEARING MATTERS AUSTRALIA

Support from real life experience

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WHAT'S NEXT AFTER A CONFIRMED HEARING LOSS?

A hearing assessment will confirm the type of hearing loss you have, and its degree. Your audiologist will interpret the results of the assessment and advise you about your next steps.

To be successful, you need professional advice to tailor your rehabilitation to your own needs. Be wary of advertising or expecting your rehabilitation to be the same as it is for others – hearing losses are not all the same, and we are all individuals with individual needs.

Common scenarios:

1. Ear Wax

Wax in the ear canals is normal and allows for self-cleaning of the ears. However, due to the shape of some people's ear canals, wax can build up and require removal. When impacted, wax can contribute to difficulty hearing and to tinnitus. If you have wax that is built up so that it is blocking your ear canals, it must be removed by a professional.

Your General Practitioner, Nurse Practitioner running a specialist wax removal clinic, audiologist with training in wax removal, or ear nose and throat specialist can remove the wax. You can use a wax softener like Waxsol or Cerumol in your ears to soften the wax.

Ear candling, use of cotton buds, or other home remedies for wax removal are not recommended as you could have a damaged ear beyond the wax that is not visible, and attempts at removing wax yourself can be very damaging.

2. Hearing loss that needs medical diagnosis and/or treatment

The hearing assessment results can indicate what part of your ear or hearing system up to the brain is interfering with hearing. Depending on what the test results show, and your personal history, your audiologist may suggest you seek a medical opinion from an ear nose and throat specialist, neurologist or general practitioner. If any medical or surgical treatment is available, you will need a repeat hearing assessment to monitor the outcomes.

Sudden hearing loss – special note

A hearing loss that comes on suddenly (overnight, or within a few hours), and/or is associated with a sudden onset of tinnitus or dizziness requires immediate and urgent attention. You can request an urgent appointment with an audiologist. If you cannot be seen within a few hours, you must instead see your GP or visit your local hospital.

Information sheets 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.



3. **Non-medical hearing rehabilitation**

By far the majority of people with hearing loss have experienced a permanent change to hearing (as a result of age, noise exposure, or other life events), for which there is no medical treatment.

In most cases, hearing rehabilitation is the next step.

Hearing rehabilitation involves ALL of the following:

Find a support group.

[Join Hearing Matters Australia](#) who will keep you informed about hearing loss and will be your contact for questions and when you need support or want to talk to people who living with hearing loss every day.

Find an audiologist to provide you with hearing rehabilitation based on your individual hearing and communication needs.

Audiology clinics provide rehabilitation programs that include:

Counselling – to talk about what has happened to your hearing and the effect on your lifestyle and those around you

Communication Training – to enable you to be most effective in your own environment, to train those who regularly communicate with you to use appropriate strategies to ensure effective communication

Hearing Technology including:

Assistive listening devices – can assist you with everyday listening such as for television or telephone use, adjusted doorbells, smoke alarms, alarm clocks.

Hearing aids – require a prescription based on your hearing test result. We recommend you do not purchase hearing aids with out a prescription, and that you have your hearing devices professionally fitted.

Implantable devices – cochlear implants, middle ear implants and bone anchored hearing aids are highly specialised devices that require an expert team. If you are recommended for an implantable device, your audiologist will work together with a surgeon. All decisions about implants need to take your health and hearing ability into account.

Ongoing support – most people with hearing loss need ongoing support to maintain their communication skills, adapt to any changes in hearing or changes to their environment, maintain any technology being used, and keep up to date. Your audiologist may suggest a range of programs and supports that you can do in the clinic and at home.

Hearing rehabilitation is a lifelong process and a journey that is worthwhile and rewarding.