



Hearing Impairment: Check Your Hearing Today

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Case Study

According to World Health Organization (WHO) hearing loss is on the rise today, approximate 422 million worldwide have a certain degree of hearing loss, WHO projection is that unless something is done by 2030 there will be nearly 630 million people with impaired hearing; by 2050, the number could rise to over 900 million.

Contrary to what may believe that hearing loss is an old age ailment, hearing affects all ages. In fact, as hearing healthcare experts we believe that people are losing their hearing at much younger ages than it was 20 years ago.

How Often Do Check Your Hearing?

This year's World Hearing Day theme is "Checking Your Hearing". It is important to note that hearing is more than just detecting bleep. A hearing test done every three to four years is sufficient but there are some exceptions that might need an annual hearing test, they include people exposed to loud noises, hearing aid wearers and people over the age of 60 years. Hearing loss often occurs gradually, it can be difficult to recognize when you have it, this is why it's so important to have your hearing checked. If you notice, any of the following, plan for a hearing test:

- Difficulty hearing conversation, especially with background noise.
- Ringing in your ears sensation.
- Frequently asking others to speak up or repeat themselves.
- Your family often has to ask you to turn the volume down on the TV.
- Your friends and family say that you don't seem to hear very well.
- You often find yourself missing jokes or parts of conversations.

Common Causes of Hearing Loss

- Excessive noise exposure.
- Aging.
- Head Injuries.
- Viral infections (such as measles or mumps).
- Ototoxic drugs (medications that damage hearing).
- Meningitis.

Hearing in Children

Hearing is important for child's speech development and language skills as they grow. In the past, hearing loss in children was hard to detect until the child was around two years old when it became obvious that the child wasn't talking yet.

Lately hearing screening and testing can be done irrespective of age. Technology has really advanced to have a one day old baby screened for hearing impairment; at IncusEar Hearing & ENT Centre we embraced this state-of-the art in screening newborns. Once screening is done, a child will either get a Pass or Refer results, if the results are Pass it is presumed that there is no hearing loss, if the results are Refer, more detailed hearing test are done and If the child is found to have a hearing loss, the most appropriate intervention is initiated early enough, this means the child speech development will not be affected. Some parents wait too long and it makes it nearly possible to offer intervention. I would like to urge parents to have their children hearing checked early enough; early

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Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) is excellent program in tackling hearing impairment.

Hearing Loss in Youth-Noise Induced

According WHO, 1.1 billion teenagers and young adults are at risk of Noise Induced Hearing Loss (NIHL) due to the unsafe use of audio devices like phones via earbuds, exposure to damaging levels of noise in entertainment venues such as nightclubs.

It is a common thing now a days to see people wearing stereo earbuds and “enjoying” music to an extent that if you are driving past them and hoot they cannot hear, this practice causes (NIHL). We advise that if you must use earbuds, please apply 60:60 rule, this means keeping volume no more than 60%, listening for not more than 60 minutes at a time.

World Health Organization (WHO) Key Facts

1) Untreated hearing loss poses an annual global cost of US \$750 billion. Interventions to stop, identify and address hearing loss are cost-effective and can bring great benefit to individuals.

2) People with hearing loss benefit from early hearing detection and intervention; use of hearing aids, cochlear implants and other assistive devices.

3) Approximately one third of people over 60 years of age are affected by disabling hearing loss.

Myths and Facts

- Myth: Hearing loss comes with aging.
- Fact: Although age is one of leading cause of hearing loss, hearing impairment affects all ages.
- Myth: Everyone will notice that I’m wearing hearing aids.
- Fact: Hearing aids have evolved to become very small and technologically advanced; some models invisibly inserted in the ear canal what is commonly called Invisible in canal (IIC).
- Myth: Hearing loss is an isolated issue that doesn’t affect my overall health.

Fact: On the contrary, hearing disorder could be a chronic public-health challenge that, if left untreated, will have sweeping consequences for physical, mental, social, and even monetary well being.