

Hearing Loss

General information for parents and carers

Different types of hearing loss

- **Conductive** hearing loss is when sound cannot pass efficiently through the outer and middle ear to the inner ear. Ear infections or glue ear are the most common types of conductive hearing loss.
- **Sensori-neural** hearing loss occurs when there is a difficulty within the cochlea or along the auditory (hearing) nerve. This type of nerve deafness is permanent.
- **Mixed** hearing loss is a combination of conductive and sensori-neural hearing loss.

Medical Intervention

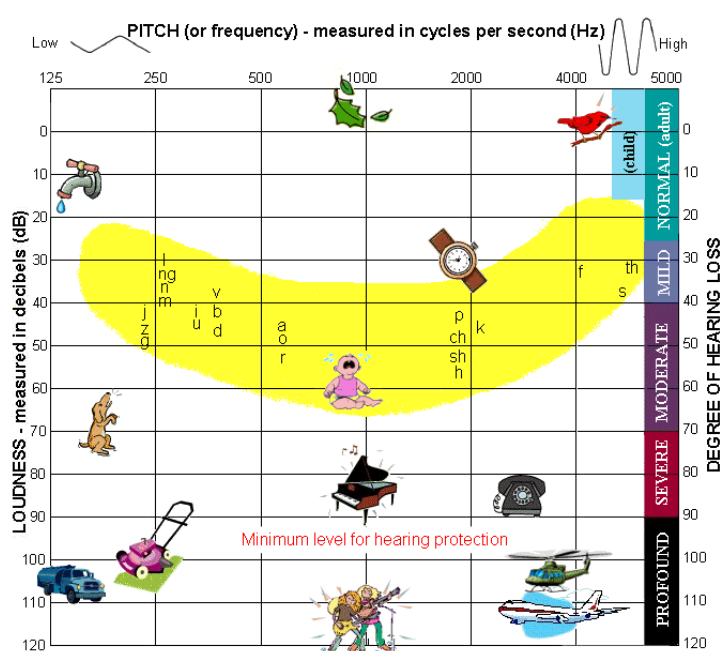
- With conductive deafness surgical intervention, such as grommets, may be suggested.
- Hearing aids may be suggested by health professionals for either sensori-neural or persistent conductive hearing loss.

The audiogram

Hearing test results are shown on an audiogram like this one. Frequency, or pitch, of sounds is shown across the audiogram and the loudness level is shown down the side.

Frequencies are measured in Hertz (Hz). The loudness of a sound is measured in decibels (dB) not percentages. The quiet sounds are at the top of the audiogram and the loud sounds at the bottom. The low-pitched sounds are on the left and the high-pitched sounds are on the right.

This audiogram also shows the loudness and frequency of some speech sounds and familiar noises.



On the audiogram a circle is used to show hearing levels in the right ear and a cross is used for the left ear. A triangle shows the levels for bone conduction when the sound goes straight to the cochlea, or inner ear. These symbols show the levels at which a sound is just audible. This is called the **hearing threshold**. You may wish to plot your child's hearing levels on the audiogram.

Your child may have a hearing loss in both ears, **bilateral**, or just one ear, **unilateral**.

If the hearing loss is bilateral, it may be similar in both ears, **symmetrical**, or quite different, **assymetrical**.

How deaf your child is depends on the level at which sound is just heard.

Degree of hearing loss

Mild loss	Moderate loss	Severe loss	Profound loss
26 – 40 dB	41 – 70 dB	71 – 95 dB	95+ dB

Causes of permanent hearing loss

There may be a number of causes of permanent hearing loss

- Sometimes hearing loss is passed down through the family although this is very difficult to predict as it may have skipped a number of generations. This is a **genetic** hearing loss.
- Deafness may be caused by complications during pregnancy or at birth. You should discuss this with your child's audiological physician at the clinic.
- Some children may acquire permanent hearing loss after they are born. This may be following infection such as measles, mumps or meningitis.
- Very loud noise such as persistent loud music may cause deafness.
- Very occasionally, a head injury can damage the hearing system.

In some cases it is very difficult to say why deafness has occurred.

Contact Details

Telephone advice can be provided by the Co-ordinator for Hearing Impairment.

- Jo-Ann Clarke Tel: 07825 380152 (East and South Kent)
- Sue Holder Tel: 07825 013351 (West and North Kent).

General information and advice is available from the National Deaf Children's Society helpline: 0808 800 8880 or the website www.ndcs.org.uk

East Kent Children's Hearing Services

Telephone: 01227 866487 **Text:** 07917 328056

Email: ekh-tr.EastKentChildrensHearingService@nhs.net

West Kent Children's Hearing Service

Telephone: 0300 1232670

Email: kentchft.childhearing@nhs.net