

Hearing Loss

Hearing loss can be divided into two basic types:

1. Temporary threshold shifts
2. Permanent loss

Hearing loss resulting from damage or aging of the central hearing mechanism is permanent.

Certain types of outer or middle ear problems can be corrected, at least partially, through surgery.

Permanent hearing loss can be caused by physical damage to the ear mechanism, by disease, by drugs, or by natural aging process.

Prolonged exposure to loud sounds, particularly around 80 to 90 dB, can produce temporary threshold shift.

Continued exposure to amplified rock music and other loud sounds has been strongly implicated as a source of hearing damage.

Risk factors

Factors that may damage or lead to loss of the hairs and nerve cells in your inner ear include:

Aging. The normal wear and tear from sounds over the years can damage the cells of your inner ear.

Loud noises. Occupational noise, such as from farming, construction or factory work, and recreational noise, such as from shooting firearms, snowmobiling, motorcycling, or listening to loud music, can contribute to the damage inside your ear.

Heredity. Your genetic makeup may make you more susceptible to ear damage.

Some medications. Drugs such as the antibiotic gentamicin and certain chemotherapy drugs can damage the inner ear. Temporary effects on your hearing — ringing in the ear (tinnitus) or hearing loss — can occur if you take very high doses of aspirin or nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), antimalarial drugs or loop diuretics.

Some illnesses. Diseases or illnesses that result in high fever, such as meningitis, may damage the cochlea.

Presbycusis

<http://www.howjsay.com/>

One form of hearing loss, presbycusis, comes on gradually as a person ages. Presbycusis can occur because of changes in the inner ear, auditory nerve, middle ear, or outer ear. Some of its causes are aging, loud noise, heredity, head injury, infection, illness, certain prescription drugs, and circulation problems such as high blood pressure.

Presbycusis commonly affects people over 50, many of whom are likely to lose some hearing each year. Having presbycusis may make it hard for a person to tolerate loud sounds or to hear what others are saying.