

How's your hearing?



Easy read

Developed in partnership
by Action on Hearing Loss
and CHANGE



Signs of hearing loss



Hearing Loss is common. One in six people in the UK has hearing loss.



You might not notice a change in your hearing at first, but there are common signs of hearing loss:



- Turning up the TV louder than your family wants it.



- Finding it hard to hear conversations in pubs and restaurants.



- Struggling to hear on the phone.



- Often asking people to repeat what they say.

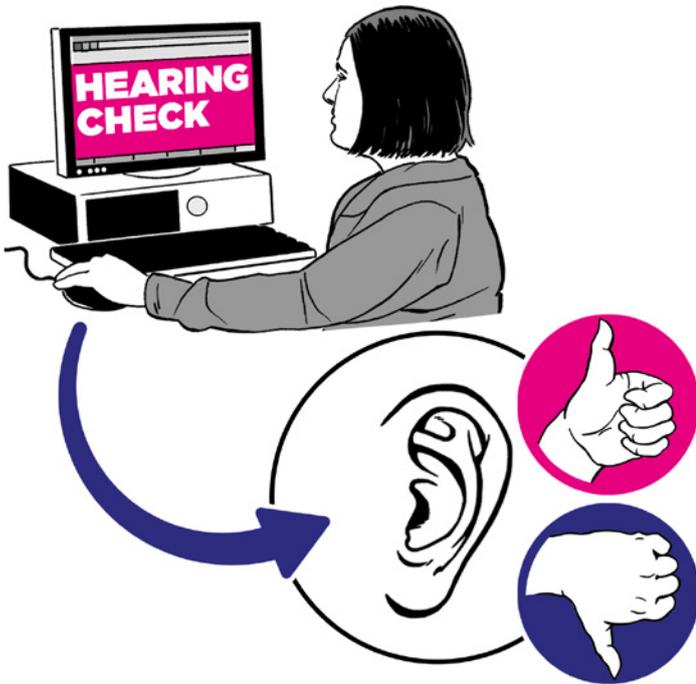


- Being told that you don't listen to people.



- Thinking that other people mumble.

What to do if you think you have hearing loss

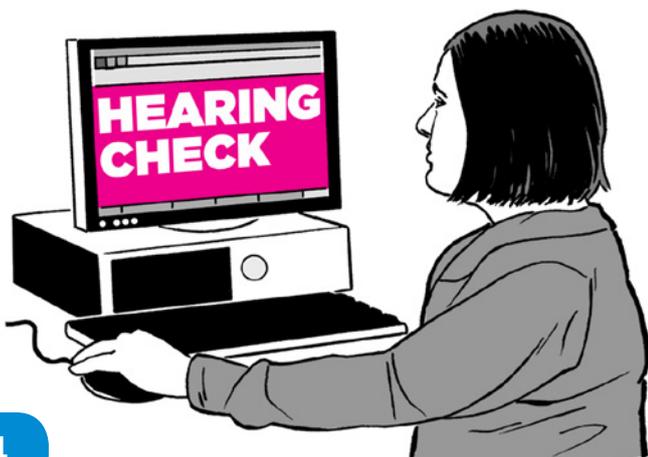


If you think you have hearing loss, take our quick and easy Hearing Check.

This will let you know if your hearing is fine or if you should see your GP.



You can take our Hearing Check over the phone at **0844 800 3838** (local rate).



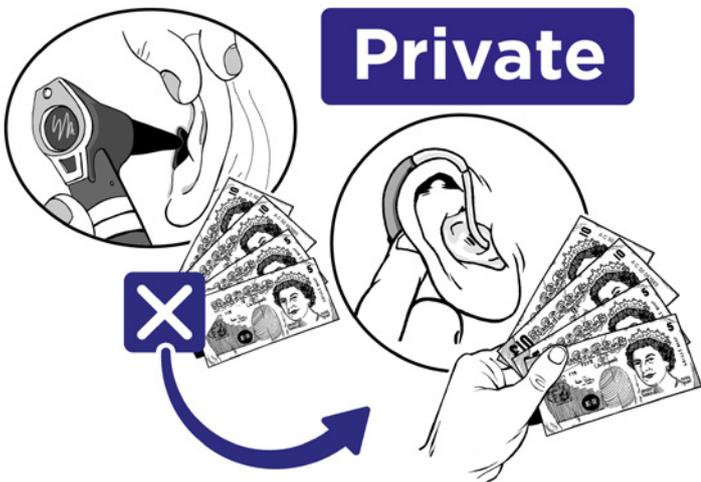
Or on our website at **actiononhearingloss.org.uk/hearingcheck**



If you want to have a private hearing test, you don't need to see your GP.



But you may still want to see a GP first, so they can check to see if your hearing problems are caused by something that can be easily treated.



Many private hearing services offer free hearing tests, but you'll have to pay for hearing aids.



Digital hearing aids are free on the NHS.



If you suddenly lose your hearing in one or both ears, call your GP or NHS 111.

What happens when you see your GP



Your GP will ask you questions about your hearing problems.



They will use a small handheld torch with a magnifying lens to look inside your ears.

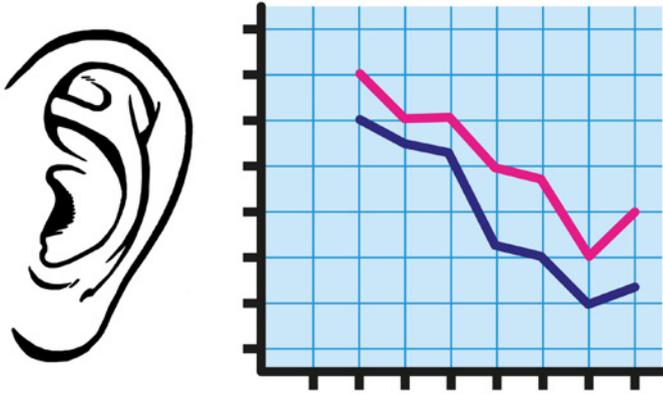


They may also carry out some simple hearing checks.



If there isn't an obvious reason for your hearing loss, your GP will send you to an NHS hearing service for a free hearing test.

How your hearing will be tested



A hearing specialist, called an audiologist, will carry out tests to find out the level of your hearing loss.



They will ask you questions about your hearing loss and check your ears.



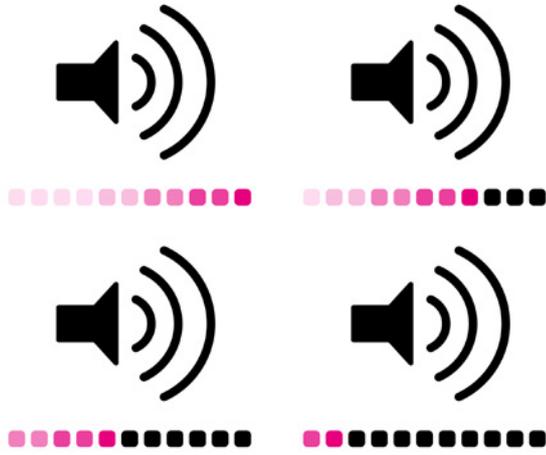
They will test one ear at a time.



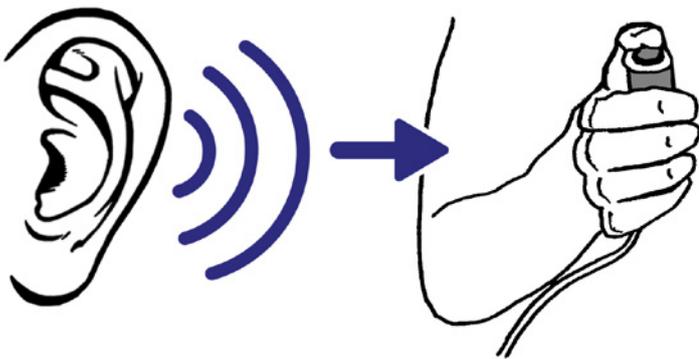
The tests last 20 minutes and are not uncomfortable.



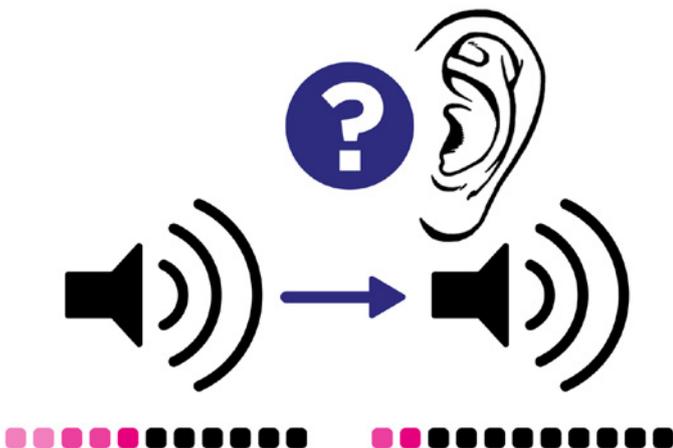
For the standard hearing test, you'll listen to noises through a set of headphones.



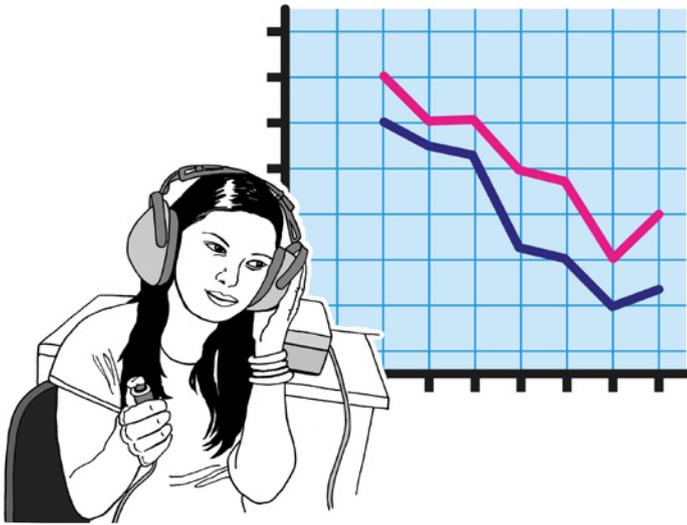
You will hear sounds of different tones and volumes.



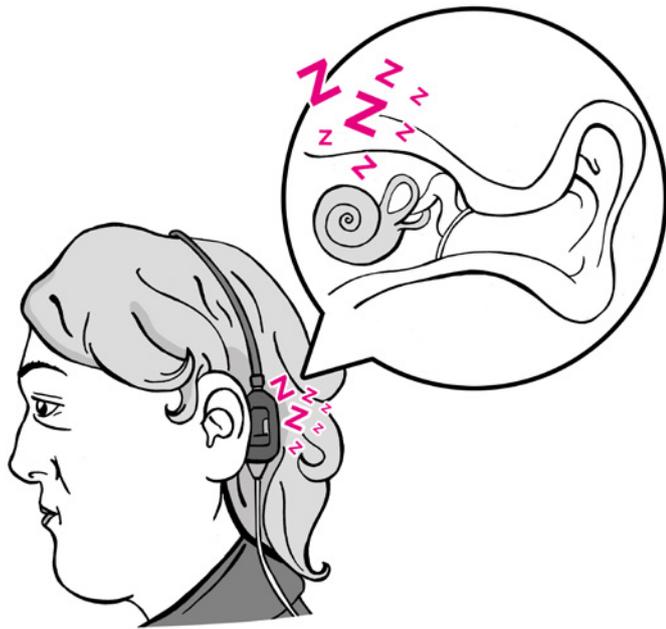
You will be asked to press a button or raise your hand each time you hear a sound.



The noises will get quieter to find the softest sounds that you can hear.

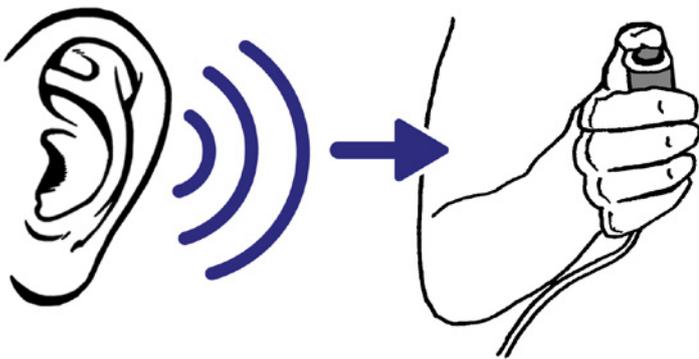


The results will be recorded on a chart called an audiogram.

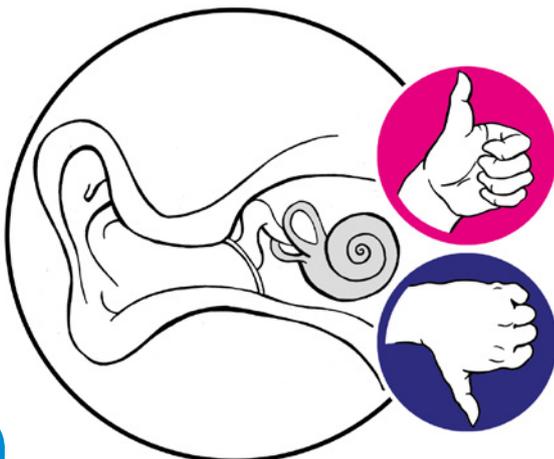


You may then be asked to wear a headband with a vibrating pad.

This pad sends sound through the bones in your head directly to the cochlea, your hearing organ in the inner ear.

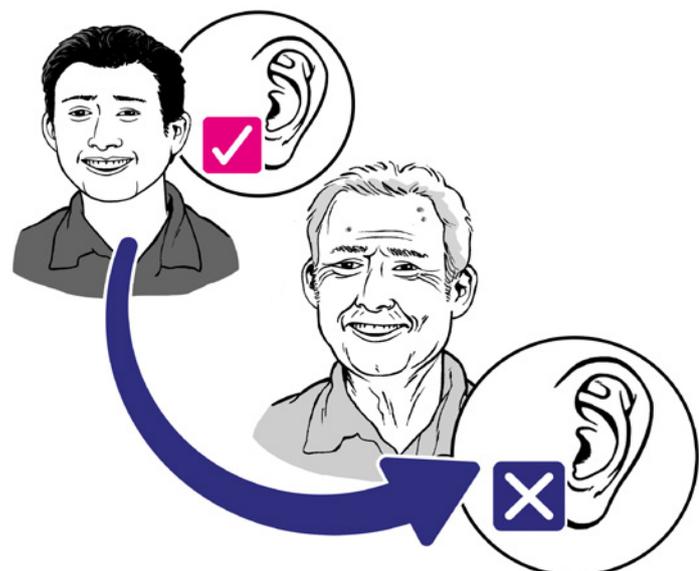
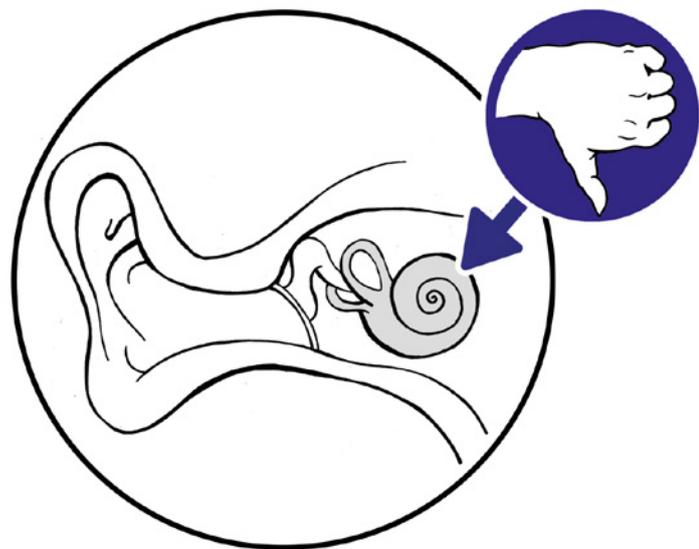
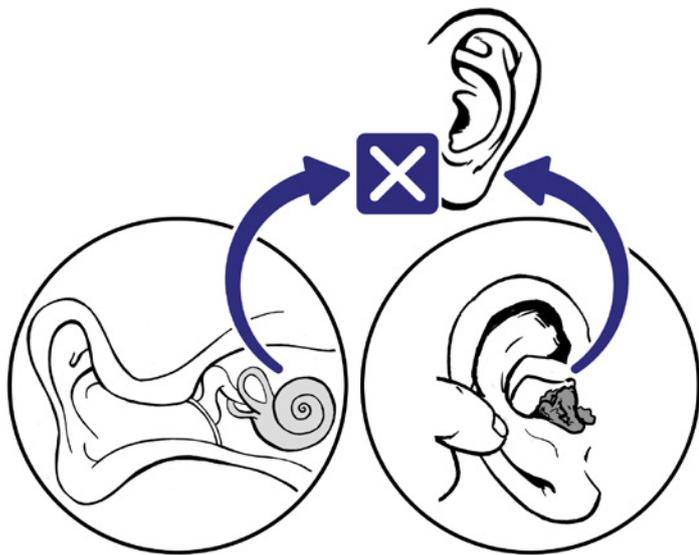


You'll be asked to press a button or raise your hand each time you hear a sound.



The test checks whether the cochlea and hearing nerve are working or damaged.

What happens if the tests show hearing loss



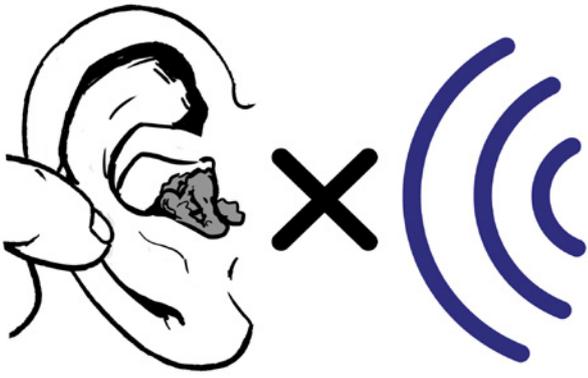
The audiologist will tell you if you have hearing loss and about the type of hearing loss you have.

It will either be sensorineural, conductive, or mixed.

Sensorineural hearing loss is caused by damage to the cochlea or hearing nerve in the inner ear.

It is permanent, which means it won't get better.

A lot of people get this type of hearing loss as they get older.

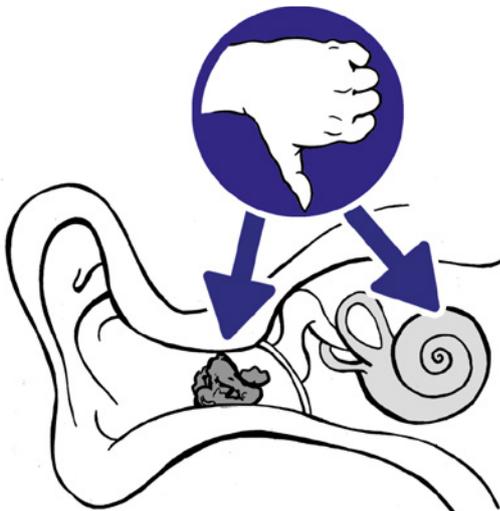


Conductive hearing loss is caused when sound waves can't get to the inner ear.

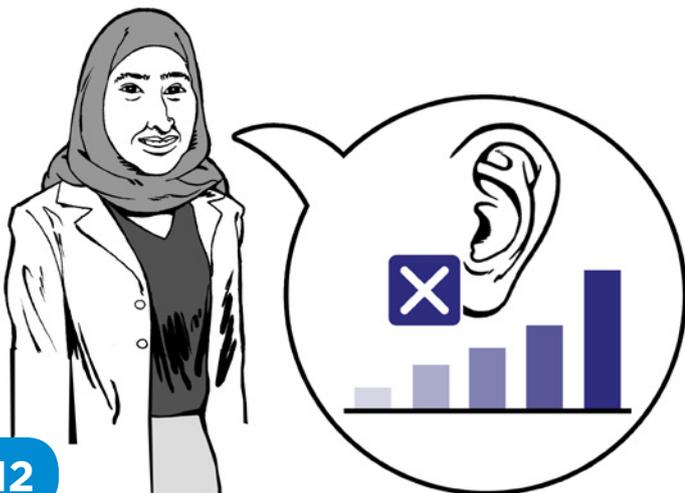
It's usually caused by a blockage or a problem in the outer or middle ear.



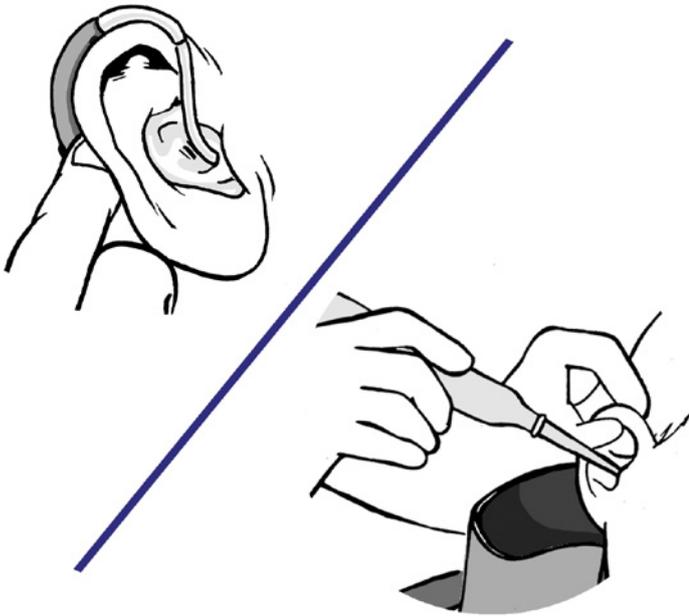
This type of hearing loss is usually temporary and can often be treated, but sometimes it's permanent.



Mixed hearing loss is when you have a mix of both types.



The audiologist will also say whether your hearing loss is mild, moderate, severe or profound.

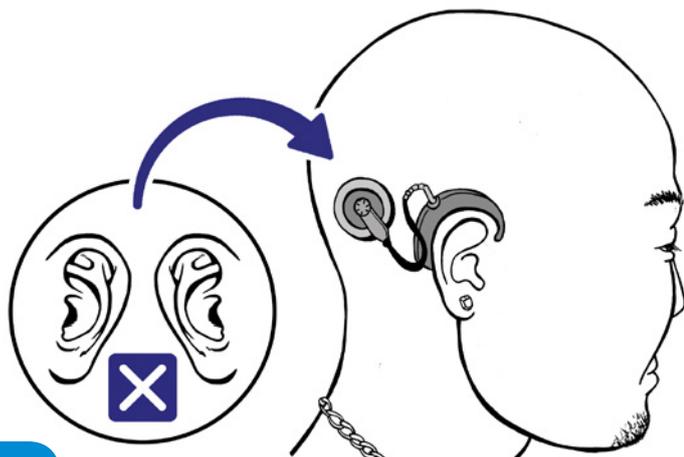
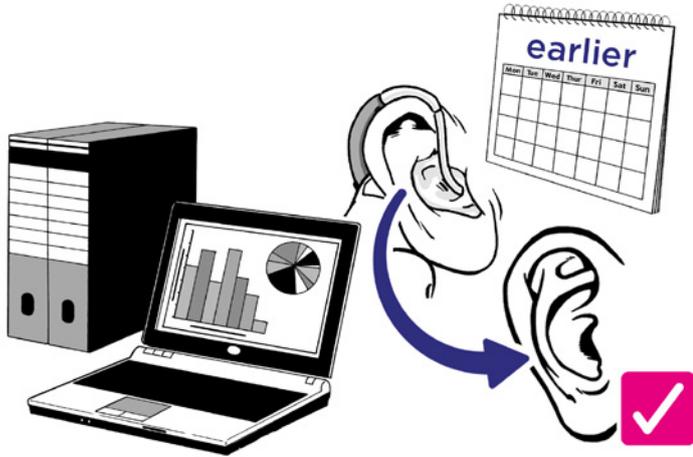


They will tell you whether hearing aids will help, or if you could have other treatment.



You may also be given information about the different types of products and support you can get to help you manage your hearing loss.

What can help with hearing loss



Hearing aids

Hearing aids don't reverse hearing loss but they can be a great help.

They should make sounds loud enough so you can hear them.

Some research shows that the earlier you get hearing aids, the more they will help your hearing.

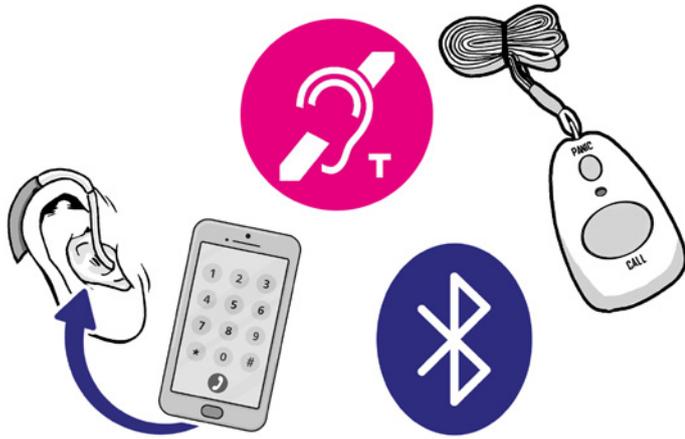
Cochlear implants

If you have a high level of deafness in both ears, you may be able to get a cochlear implant to help you hear.

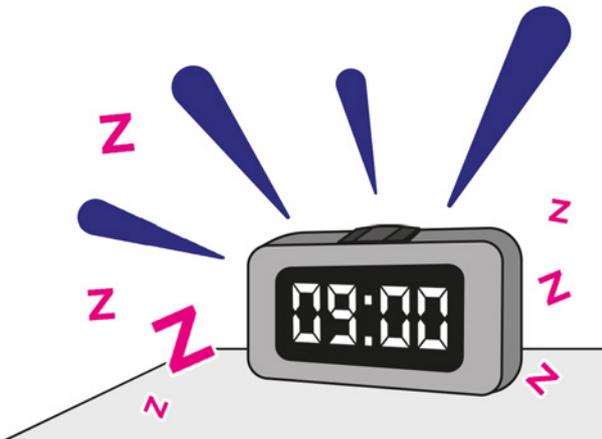
Ask your audiologist about this.

Products and technology

There are lots of products that can help with hearing loss.



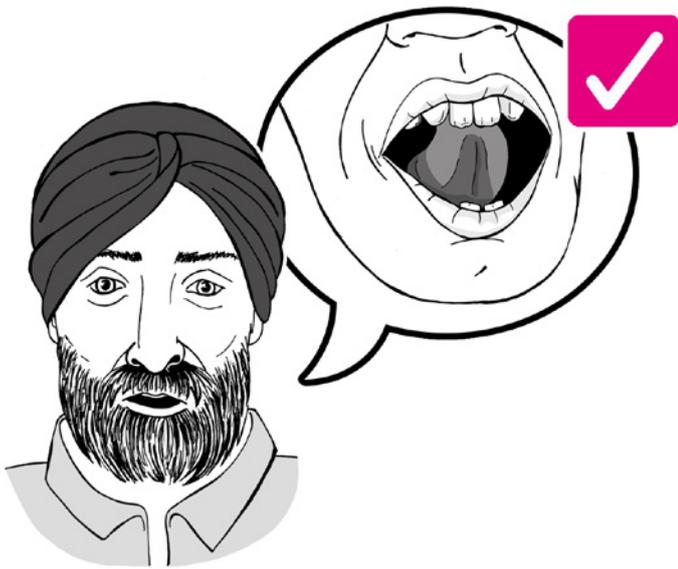
You can buy phones that work with hearing aids.



There are alarms and alerts that flash, vibrate or are extra loud to get your attention.



Personal listeners can help you to hear speech, the TV and music more clearly over background noise.



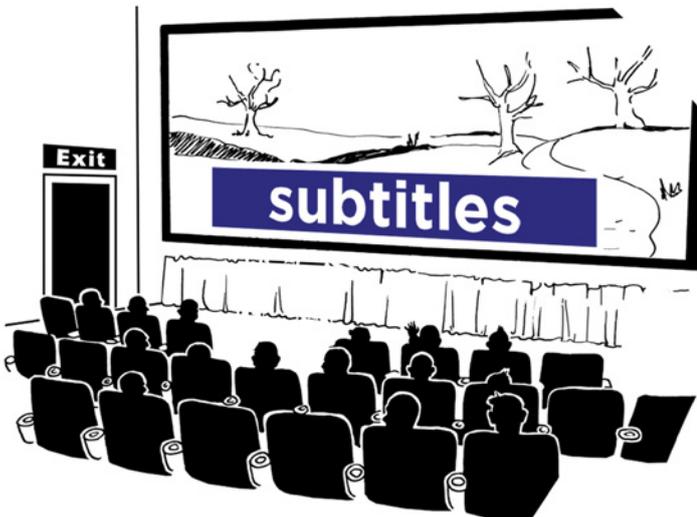
Learning to lipread

Lipreading involves watching the lips of the person you are talking to, so you can follow what they are saying.

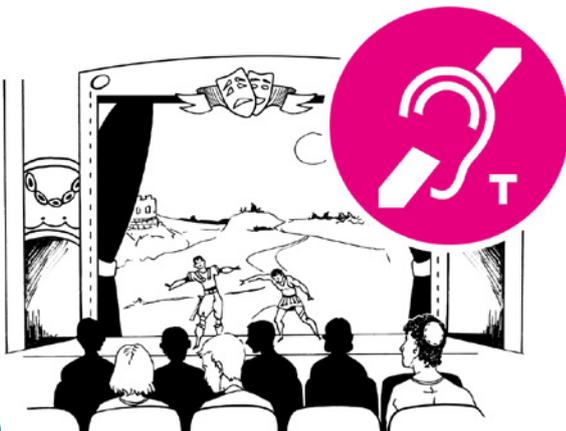


Accessible entertainment

Most TV programmes and DVDs are subtitled.



Many theatres and cinemas have special performances or film screenings that have subtitles or a British Sign Language interpreter.



They may also have hearing loop or infrared systems to help you hear over background noise.



Many museums and art galleries also offer tours that are accessible to people with hearing loss.



Other support

You may also be able to get money from the government, equipment and communication support to help you manage hearing loss.

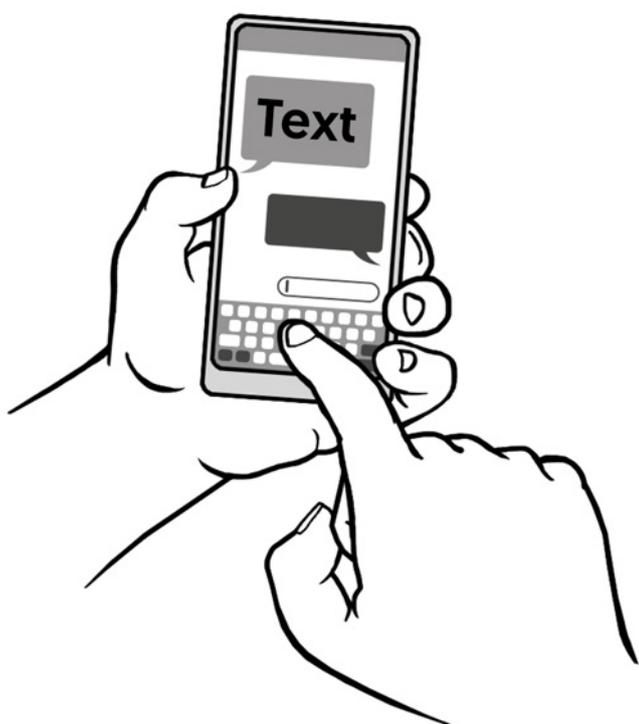
More information



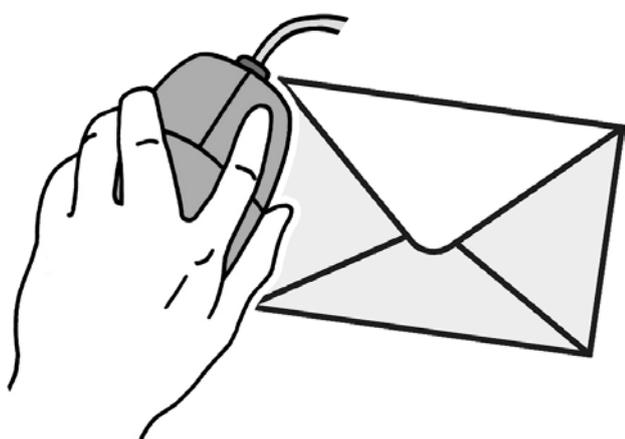
Experts and people with hearing loss help us write our information to make sure it's right.



For more information about hearing loss, call our Information Line on **0808 808 0123**.

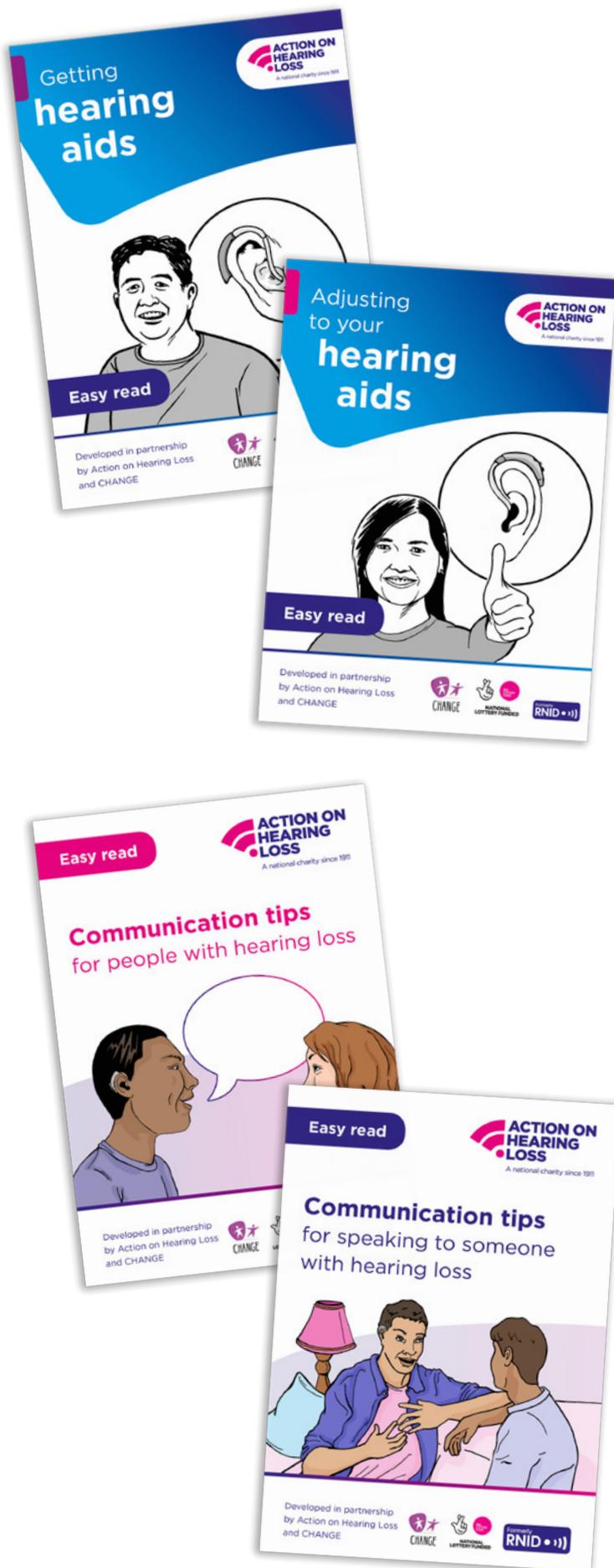


You can also send a text message to **07800 000 360**.



You can also email **information@hearingloss.org.uk**

Other information in Easy Read



Getting hearing aids

Adjusting to your hearing aids

Communication tips for people with hearing loss

Communication tips for speaking to someone with hearing loss

Action on Hearing Loss (formerly RNID) is the largest UK charity helping people who are confronting deafness, tinnitus and hearing loss.

We give support and care, develop technology and treatments, and campaign for equality.

We rely on donations to continue our vital work.

To find out more, visit [**actiononhearingloss.org.uk**](http://actiononhearingloss.org.uk)

Questions about deafness, tinnitus or hearing loss?
Contact our free, confidential Information Line:

Telephone **0808 808 0123**

Textphone **0808 808 9000**

SMS **0780 000 0360**
(standard text message rates apply)

Email **information@hearingloss.org.uk**

Join us

 **Action on Hearing Loss**

 **@ActionOnHearing**



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Action on Hearing Loss is the trading name of The Royal National Institute for Deaf People.

A registered charity in England and Wales (207720) and Scotland (SC038926).
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