

# Help for Hearing Loss



Do people seem to mumble a lot lately? Do you have trouble hearing in church or theaters? Do you lose the thread of conversation at the dinner table or at family gatherings? Does your family repeatedly ask you to turn down the volume on the TV or radio?

These are signs of gradual, age-related hearing loss called presbycusis. High-pitched sounds are especially difficult to discern. Another way to detect this problem is to hold a watch to your ear. If you can't hear it ticking, see an otolaryngologist (a physician who treats disorders of the ear, nose, and throat) or an otologist (a physician who specializes in ear disorders).

You should also get help if one or both ears ring continuously, or if loud noises cause pain in your ears.

Hearing loss from presbycusis cannot be restored, but hearing aids, along with the following self-help methods, are helpful.

- Ask people to speak clearly, distinctly, and in a normal tone.
- Look at people when they are talking to you. Watch their expressions to help you understand what they are saying. Ask them to face you.
- Try to limit background noise when having a conversation.
- In a church or theater, sit near, but not in the front row. Sit in the third or fourth row with people sitting around you.
- To rely on sight instead of sound, install a buzzer, flasher, or amplifier on your telephone, door chime, and alarm clock.

Also, an audiologist (hearing therapist) may be able to show you other techniques for “training” yourself to hear better.