

# Audiologists – Your Hearing and Balance Professionals

## What is an Audiologist?

Audiologists are health care professionals who assess, treat and educate to prevent hearing and balance problems. They are trained to perform a variety of tests to determine the nature and degree of an individual's hearing and/or balance problems. They see people of all ages – babies, children and adults.

Once the hearing and/or balance problem is known, an audiologist can help determine the best action to help individuals deal with their problems.

## Hearing Loss and Balance Problems

- ~ Audiologists can provide education on the prevention and treatment of hearing loss and balance disorders.
- ~ For people with hearing loss, audiologists prescribe and fit hearing aids, cochlear implants, and assistive listening devices such as telephone amplifiers and FM systems.
- ~ For people with balance disorders, audiologists prescribe and manage balance re-training exercises in cooperation with other professions including physicians such as ear-nose-throat specialists (ENT's), physiotherapists, and other occupational therapists.
- ~ Audiologists can refer patients to physicians when their hearing or balance problem requires medical or surgical attention, and coordinate with such physicians the management of any after surgery issues.

## Common Signs of Hearing Difficulty

- ~ Having the TV turned up louder than other people would like
- ~ Inability to clearly hear people in a group or crowd
- ~ Regularly asking people to repeat themselves
- ~ Difficulty hearing on the telephone or when driving in the car
- ~ A general feeling that you may not be hearing as well as you once did

An audiologist will test your hearing and then provide you with options of how to help with your hearing problems such as:

- ~ Counselling regarding communication strategies
- ~ Hearing aids where appropriate
- ~ Telephone amplifiers
- ~ TV listening devices
- ~ Referral to an ENT doctor
- ~ Referral for additional testing at another facility
- ~ Hearing training

Audiologists are also experts in the identification and management of tinnitus. They can help you deal with this condition through such treatments as sound therapy, re-working your living environment, hearing aids, or a combination of all three.

## When to Visit an Audiologist

If you have trouble hearing what people are saying, if you are having dizziness issues, or ringing/buzzing in your ears, you should discuss your symptoms with your family doctor and you should see an audiologist for a hearing and balance assessment.

## Where Can I Find an Audiologist?

Audiologists work in:

- ~ Hospitals (balance and/or hearing divisions)
- ~ Medical clinics (often in conjunction with ENT doctors)
- ~ Private practice offices (diagnostic assessments and hearing aid provisions)
- ~ Speech and hearing centres

Audiologists can also be found in some public and private schools, nursing homes and government agencies (e.g. provincial Workers Compensation Boards and Veterans Affairs Canada).

You do not need a referral from a physician to see an audiologist about your hearing and/or balance problems.

## Ask an Audiologist

If you have questions about your hearing or balance, or those of someone you love, make a call to an audiologist today. Your ears deserve the best!

## Other Fact Sheets Available

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|--|---|---|
| ~ Auditory Processing Disorder in Children   | ~ Fancy Earphones for Music                       | ~ When Should A Child Be Referred For A Hearing Test? |
| ~ American Sign Language   | ~ Health Food Store Preparations and Hearing Loss | ~ Sudden Deafness                                     |
| ~ Amplification Options for Adults   | ~ Frequently Asked Questions about Hearing Aids   | ~ Tinnitus  |
| ~ Amplification Options for Children   | ~ Hearing Loss and Your Child                     | ~ Usher Syndrome                                      |
| ~ Auditory Neuropathy  | ~ How Loud is too Loud?                           | ~ Vestibular Schwannoma                               |
| ~ Captions for Deaf and Hard-of Hearing Viewers                                    | ~ Ipods, MP3 Players, and Recreational Music      | ~ (Acoustic Neuroma) and Neurofibromatosis            |
| ~ How Do I Know If My Child Can Hear Me?   | ~ Ménière's Disease                               | ~ Waardenburg Syndrome                                |
| ~ Cochlear Implants  | ~ Noise: Keeping It Down at Home                  | ~ How Do I Get Wax Out of My Ears?                    |
| ~ How Do You Determine Degree Of Hearing Loss And What Does This Mean For A Child? | ~ Otosclerosis                                    | ~ What is an Ear Infection?                           |
| ~ Enlarged Vestibular Aqueducts and Childhood Hearing Loss                         | ~ Peak vs. RMS in Movies and TV Commercials       | ~ Why Teach Tweens about                              |
|  | ~ Pendred Syndrome                                | ~ Noise-Induced Hearing Loss?                         |
|  | ~ Presbycusis                                     | ~ You and Your Hearing                                |