

Audiologists – Your Hearing and Balance Professionals

What is an Audiologist?

Audiologists are health care professionals who specialize in testing hearing and balance. They are specially 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.

Hearing Loss and Balance Problems

- ~ 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 physicians such as ear-nose-throat specialists (ENT's).
- ~ Audiologists commonly refer patients to physicians when the 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:

- ~ Hearing aids
- ~ 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 or if you are having dizziness issues, it is best to have your family doctor refer you to an ENT physician or to the audiology department of your local hospital 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

- ~ Balance Disorders
- ~ Noise-Induced Hearing Loss
- ~ Cochlear Implants
- ~ Your Child's Hearing and Language Development Checklist
- ~ Presbycusis
- ~ The Noise in Your Ears (Tinnitus)
- ~ Otosclerosis
- ~ Ménière's Disease
- ~ Ear Infections – Facts for Parents About Otitis Media
- ~ How Loud is Too Loud? How Long is Too Long?
- ~ Why Teaching Children About NIHL Prevention Matters
- ~ American Sign Language
- ~ Speech and Language Developmental Milestones
- ~ When a Newborn Doesn't Pass the Hearing Screening
- ~ Vestibular Schwannoma (Acoustic Neuroma) and Neurofibromatosis
- ~ Enlarged Vestibular Aqueducts and Childhood Hearing Loss
- ~ Pendred Syndrome
- ~ Hearing Aids
- ~ Usher Syndrome
- ~ Sudden Deafness
- ~ Has Your Baby's Hearing Been Screened?
- ~ Why are Television Commercials Louder than the Television Program?