



Diocese of Toowoomba
Catholic Schools

Understanding hearing health

and the impact on your child



How are **your** ears today?

DO
THE
5

Feel better to learn better with healthy ears!

Understanding hearing health and the impact on your child

FACT
MOST HEARING
LOSS IS
PREVENTABLE

Early identification is important, resulting in better outcomes for your child's language, learning and overall development.

Hearing loss refers to reduced hearing levels, which can be caused by a number of things. Hearing loss can either be from birth (congenital) or at any age (acquired). Hearing loss can range from mild to profound and can be temporary or permanent. Some of the reasons for hearing loss are listed below.

Temporary hearing loss (Conductive hearing loss)

- build-up of wax in the ear canal
- a foreign object (such as a bead or the tip of a cotton bud) stuck in the ear canal
- excess mucus in the Eustachian tube, caused by a cold
- excess fluid in the Eustachian tube, causing the need for grommet insertion
- otitis media (infection of the middle ear).



Permanent hearing loss (Sensori-neural hearing loss)

- hereditary conditions that cause the inner ear to develop abnormally
- some genetic disorders
- exposure of the unborn baby to diseases
- loud noises, such as firearms, rock concerts or personal stereos
- injuries, such as concussion or skull fracture
- certain diseases, such as meningitis and mumps.



Even a mild hearing loss can mean that a child is missing up to 25% of speech (1 in every 4 words).

Some signs that your child may have trouble hearing

- don't respond when called
- have a dip in school grades
- complain of a ringing sound in their ears (tinnitus)
- talk too loudly
- watch the television with the volume turned up too high
- pronounce words incorrectly
- appear inattentive and prone to daydreaming.



Accessing the world when a person has a hearing loss can be frustrating and lonely. A child with hearing loss may experience

- a drop in self-esteem and confidence
- frustration
- fatigue
- anxiety
- withdrawal and isolation from social groups.

If not identified and managed appropriately, hearing loss can impact negatively on child's educational pathway, including post-school employment and study.



What is the difference between a hearing screener and an audiology test?

A **hearing screener** is not a full hearing test. It is the first step in evaluating a child's hearing health. It does not diagnose hearing loss. A hearing screener is administered in Queensland soon after a child's birth (New Born Screener) and may also be provided during the Prep year by a Health Nurse. Its main function is to determine whether a child should be referred on to other services (such as Audiology or a GP). A hearing screener is usually free, and can be accessed at any age via most Queensland Health providers. If a child fails a hearing screener, they will be referred to an Audiologist for further testing.

An **audiology test** (full hearing test) is a more in-depth assessment of a child's hearing, which will help to determine the nature and degree of hearing loss. An Audiologist will administer an audiology test. Depending on the results, and the child's hearing health history, a referral may follow to an Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) specialist for further management. Audiology services vary in cost.

DO THE 5

BREATHE
BLOW
COUGH
WASH
CHEW

How to support your child if you suspect they have hearing loss

- make an appointment to see your GP to discuss referral to Audiology
- educate your child to recognise when they may be experiencing difficulties hearing at school
- communicate with your child's classroom teacher and Learning Support Teacher to discuss concerns you may have regarding your child's access at school
- consider annual hearing tests for the whole family
- educate your child on good hearing practices around the home including
 - wearing hearing protection for loud activities
 - practice BREATHE BLOW COUGH WASH CHEW daily (resources are available from your school)
 - make them aware of dangerous volume levels when using personal music devices.

Hearing health and associated hearing loss impacts everyone in your family.

If you are concerned about your own hearing health, please follow up with your GP.



References

<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/hearing-loss-how-it-affects-people>

<https://www.hearing.com.au>

Toowoomba Catholic Schools are committed to protecting and managing hearing health for all students.



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