

Types of Hearing Loss

****Sudden hearing loss needs urgent evaluation and treatment. Please notify your physician immediately****

There are three types of hearing loss: conductive, sensorineural and mixed.

Conductive Hearing Loss:

This occurs when there's a problem outer ear, ear drum or middle ear. Conductive hearing loss can be caused by:

- ❖ Malformation of the outer ear, ear canal or middle ear structures
- ❖ Fluid behind the eardrums,
- ❖ Ear infection,
- ❖ Perforation of the tympanic membrane
- ❖ Swimmer's ear
- ❖ Impacted cerumen in the ear canal
- ❖ Foreign body in the ear
- ❖ Otosclerosis
- ❖ Poor eustachian tube dysfunction

Conductive hearing loss can be medically or surgically corrected. Hearing can be improved by use of amplification or bone conduction hearing aid, or surgically implanted device depending on the type of the condition.

Sensorineural Hearing Loss:

This occurs when there are problems in the inner ear or the nerve pathways from the inner ear to the brain. Sensorineural hearing loss is the most common type of hearing loss. Possible causes are:

- ❖ Exposure to loud noise
- ❖ Viral or autoimmune disease
- ❖ Head trauma
- ❖ Aging
- ❖ Malformation of the inner ear
- ❖ Ototoxic drugs
- ❖ Tumors
- ❖ Genetic factors

Hearing can be improved by use of amplification. In some situations, hearing aids are not sufficient where other options such as cochlear implant may be considered.

Mixed Hearing Loss:

This occurs when a conductive hearing loss happens combined with a sensorineural hearing loss. There may be damage in the outer or middle ear and in the inner ear or auditory nerve. Mixed hearing loss can be medically treated and/or benefit from amplification.