**EA Sensory Service**  

# Understanding Hearing Loss Levels

Levels of hearing, and hearing loss, are referred to in terms of the decibel ranges.

| **Level of Hearing Loss** | **Decibels** |
| --- | --- |
| Normal Hearing | 0-20dB |
| Mild Hearing Loss | 21-40dB |
| Moderate Hearing Loss | 41-70dB |
| Severe Hearing Loss | 71-90dB |
| Profound Hearing Loss | 90+ dB |

## MILD HEARING LOSS

People with mildhearing lossmay have difficulty in following speech, especially in noisy situations. Hearing aids are sometimes prescribed.

## MODERATE HEARING LOSS

Those with moderatehearing lossfind it difficult to follow speech and have even greater difficulty in noisy situations. Hearing aids are generally prescribed.

## SEVERE HEARING LOSS

People with severehearing loss generally have difficulty following speech, even with a hearing aid, and may have to lip-read to understand/discriminate speech. Cochlear implantation may be offered. Some people may use other forms of communication in addition to or instead of speech, such as sign language.

## PROFOUND HEARING LOSS

Hearing aids are often of little or no benefit for speech discrimination to people with profound hearing loss. Cochlear implantation may be offered and/or other modes of communication such as sign language may be used.

## HIGH FREQUENCY HEARING LOSS

 If both low and mid-pitch hearing are preserved the ability to detect speech is often excellent. However, the missing **high-frequency** information interferes with word understanding. The child may not realize that a hearing loss is present and blames others for mumbling. Women and children are more difficult to understand because their voices have more high-frequency content than men's voices. The child may do quite well in a one-to-one situation but the effects of high-frequency hearing loss usually become apparent when the listening situation is not ideal, for instance, in background noise, in groups, or when speakers are at a distance.

## UNILATERAL HEARING LOSS

A hearing loss may occur in just one ear. People with a one-sided or unilateral hearing loss usually manage quite well in most situations, but may find it difficult to follow conversation if speakers are standing on their affected side, particularly when there is background noise.

You can learn more about levels of hearing loss by visiting this [link](https://www.ndcs.org.uk/information-and-support/childhood-deafness/what-is-deafness/levels-of-deafness/)

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For further advice please contact the Sensory Service via phone: 028 25 661 258 or email: sensoryservice@eani.org.uk