



AUDITORY SYSTEM

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HEARING LOSS FACTS

- Males are more likely to have hearing loss than females
- More than 1 out of every 4 people over 65 have hearing loss
- An average of 3 out of every 100 school age children are affected with hearing loss
- Only a doctor can diagnose the cause of a hearing loss
- Sudden hearing loss should be treated as an emergency

LOCAL 50 BENEFITS

- Hearing screening is covered under the regular plan guidelines
- The Plan pays actual charges for the cost of a hearing aid for one or both ears subject to a limit of **\$1000 per calendar year** per eligible person. Any excess of the limit can be paid for out of your supplemental credit reserve account

HEARING LOSS

Hearing loss ranks third in line after arthritis and heart disease as one of the most common physical conditions. There are 36 million people in the United States who have hearing loss. On average it takes people seven years from the time they suspect hearing loss to the time they seek treatment.

Hearing occurs when sound waves reach the structures inside your ear, where the sound wave vibrations are converted into nerve signals that your brain recognizes as sound. There are three basic types of hearing loss: conductive, sensorineural, and mixed hearing loss.

Conductive loss occurs when sound is not conducted efficiently through

the outer ear canal to the eardrum and the tiny bones of the middle ear. This loss usually is a reduction in sound level or the ability to hear faint sound. Some possible causes are: ear infection, allergies, perforated eardrum, benign tumor, impacted earwax, or foreign body. This type of loss can be corrected medically or surgically.

Sensorineural hearing loss is the most common type of permanent hearing loss. This occurs when there is damage to the inner ear, or to the nerve pathways from the inner ear to the brain. Some possible causes are: illness, drugs that are toxic to hearing, genetic, aging, head trauma, malformation of the inner ear and exposure to loud noise. This type of hear-

ing loss cannot be medically or surgically corrected.

Mixed loss is a combination of conductive and sensorineural hearing loss which may or may not be medically or surgically treated.

Most hearing loss cannot be reversed but a hearing specialist can take steps to improve what you hear. Treatment depends on the cause and severity of your hearing loss. Options include: removing wax blockage, hearing aids, and cochlear implants.

Protecting your ears in the workplace, having your hearing tested, and avoiding recreational risks are your best prevention against hearing loss.

EAR CLEANING

The best ear cleaning is really to do nothing at all, according to the American Academy of Otolaryngology. The ear canal has the ability to clean itself. Earwax slowly moves from the canal to the opening of the ear with normal jaw movements where it can then fall out of the ear.

Washing the external ear with a cloth without inserting

anything into the ear canal will clean the ear.

Most cases of ear wax blockage respond to a few drops of mineral or baby oil, or commercial drops such as hydrogen peroxide or carbamide peroxide to aid in the removal of wax. Using an ear syringe with warmed water or saline to body temperature to irrigate will help in removing remaining wax. If you have a history

of any ear disease, you should not treat yourself but see your doctor for wax removal.

.Attempting to clean wax blockage with a cotton swab only pushes the wax deeper into the canal and should not be used.

Ear wax candles are not safe and should not be used to remove wax as they can result in serious injury.