People First

People First is our promise:
to empower people
to communicate freely,
interact naturally and
participate actively

TO SCHEDULE A HEARING APPOINTMENT CONTACT:

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Open The Door To
A NEW WORLD
Of Better Hearing



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A Short Guide To Better Hearing

INFORMATION FROM YOUR HEARING CARE PROFESSIONAL

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Don’t let your hearing loss shut you out from

FAMILY, FRIENDS AND LIFE.





Your sense of hearing is a vital link to your world–a source of pleasure, information and communication.

If you have a hearing loss you can take control of the situation. Hearing loss should not get in the way of enjoying your life.









Your sense of hearing is precious. Hearing contributes to personal safety, emotional well-being, and independence. Through your hearing you are able to communicate directly with others and experience the sounds in your environment.

It's no wonder that hearing loss can be a challenge! Studies have linked the effects of untreated hearing loss to many problems, including stress, depression, isolation, reduced earning power, and even health issues. But thanks to major strides in the field of hearing care, there are solutions for you that can improve your life.

You are not alone- Hearing loss often occurs naturally, as people get older. We commonly associate hearing loss with advancing age but that is not the whole picture. Although hearing loss is common in older adults, affecting approximately 30% of people over age 60, hearing changes can occur in one's 30's and 40's. A surprising fact is that 65% of individuals with hearing loss are below retirement age. About 15% of Baby Boomers, age 41-59, and more than 7% of Gen Xers (age 29-40) already have significant issues with their hearing.

Because hearing loss occurs so gradually, its effects are sometimes not immediately obvious. It's typically not easy to recognize a change in one's own hearing. Often it's a friend, co-worker or family member that points it out. But often it's hard to believe that it's happening to you.

Did you know?

More than 11% of the US population has hearing loss that affects everyday life. That's more than 34 million people.

Taking good care of your hearing is your responsibility. It's up to you to be alert to the signs and have your hearing checked if you suspect that your hearing may be changing.

People get their eyes tested and their teeth checked on a regular basis, so why not look after your ears too? It might just be earwax. If there is a problem, a solution can be found. Consider how precious your hearing is. You can get help and get so much more out of life.



What Causes Hearing Loss?

Close your eyes and concentrate. Listen to the sounds around you —the steady hum of a lawnmower, perhaps a car passing by, or children playing outside. What you are experiencing are the "vibrations" of sound. The human ear is normally remarkably sensitive to a wide range of sounds. Sound vibrations are processed by the ears, the nervous system and the brain, becoming what we perceive as "sound signals".

Our ears are very delicate instruments, and our ability to hear can diminish for a number of reasons. The majority of people develop a hearing loss as they get older. Over time, part of the ear's delicate mechanism may break down or simply wear out.

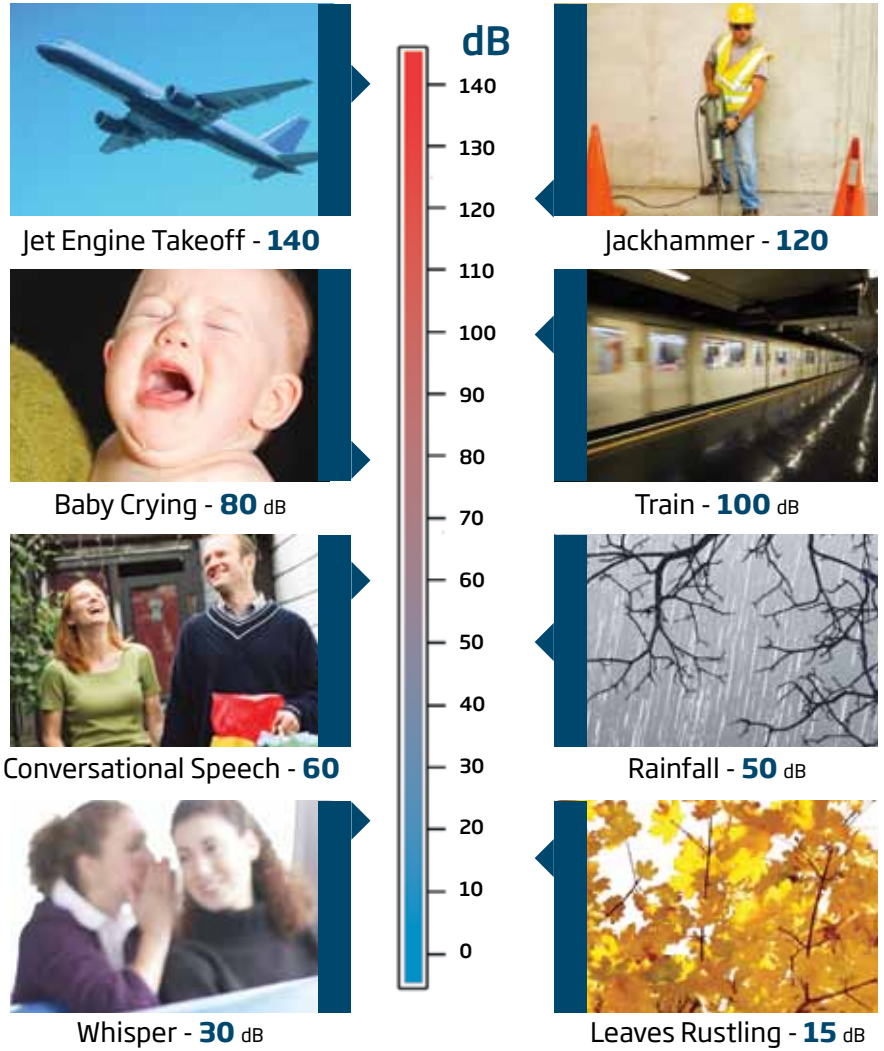
Excessive noise exposure is the number one reason for hearing loss. Many work settings and recreational activities are quite noisy and can be damaging your inner ear. It's wise to avoid high volume levels on your car stereo and MP3 player and to wear earplugs at concerts and around loud noise.

No matter what the cause, the real problem is often not the hearing loss itself, but that most people don't know that they can do something about it.

Did you know?

Regular exposure to loud noise will accelerate hearing loss. The risk intensifies with greater decibel levels and longer exposure. Levels of 80 dB and greater present a significant risk to your hearing.

Decibel Levels of Common Sounds



How to Tell Whether You Have a Hearing Loss

Hearing changes often do not result in an overall loss of volume. Some sounds remain as audible as they always were, yet others become harder to hear, and some conversations require more attentiveness.

Did you know?

Noises and sounds you hear are actually a blend of different pitches or frequencies. Some sounds are high pitched, such as consonants 'f', 's' or 't'. Others are low pitched, such as vowels 'a', 'i' and 'u'.

You might notice that words just don't sound clear.

Why is clarity affected? Many people with hearing loss find it especially difficult to hear certain sounds because their hearing loss affects a certain range of pitches. In typical hearing loss, softer, higher pitch sounds become harder to hear, particularly from a distance.

Speech has many quiet, rapidly changing high pitched sounds. A lot of guesswork may be needed to understand the actual word if some of the speech sounds are not heard clearly. An example is the word "fit" which can easily be confused with "sit", "tick" or "sick". Conversations become more challenging when someone is speaking indirectly, or when there is background noise.



Awareness Is The First Step

Because people with hearing loss often do fairly well in quiet, face-to-face situations, signs of hearing loss often may not be obvious to the doctor. Only a small percentage of doctors routinely screen for hearing loss. It's up to you to be alert to the signs and to tell your doctor if you suspect that your hearing may be changing.

To make a quick assessment of your own hearing, try answering these simple questions:

TEST YOUR HEARING

Do you suspect that your hearing is not as good as it used to be? The following questions will allow you to make a quick assessment:

	Yes	No
1. Do people seem to mumble or speak in a softer voice than they used to?	☐	☐
2. Do you feel tired or irritable after a long conversation?	☐	☐
3. Do you sometimes miss key words in a sentence, or frequently need to ask people to repeat themselves?	☐	☐
4. When you are in a group, or in a crowded restaurant, is it difficult for you to follow the conversation?	☐	☐
5. When you are together with other people, does background noise bother you?	☐	☐
6. Do you often need to turn up the volume on your TV or radio?	☐	☐
7. Do you find it difficult to hear the doorbell or the telephone ring?	☐	☐
8. Do you find it difficult to hear water boiling when you are in the kitchen?	☐	☐
9. Is carrying on a telephone conversation difficult?	☐	☐
10. Do you find it difficult to pinpoint where an object is (e.g. an alarm clock or a telephone) from the noise it makes?	☐	☐
11. Has someone close to you mentioned that you might have a problem with your hearing?	☐	☐

If you have answered "yes" to one or more of the above questions you will benefit from a hearing consultation.

Your Hearing Consultation

Only a qualified hearing care professional can tell you whether there is a hearing loss and recommend the best course of action. People experience relief when they learn the facts and gain a strong sense of control over their situation.

It's very easy to schedule a visit with your hearing care professional. During your visit, he or she will conduct a hearing examination and let you know your results.



Your hearing care professional will discuss your hearing history to understand what factors have influenced your hearing, and also to get more information on your personal hearing needs:

- *how you think you are doing in different situations*
- *what you are doing to deal with hearing issues in your everyday life*
- *your hearing "wish list"–in what situations do you need improvement*

As your appointment approaches, it is a good idea to start thinking about these questions.

Bring Someone With You

Because the sense of hearing is of such great social importance, the decision to seek hearing help is very often a family event. Sometimes it is a spouse, son, daughter or friend who first recognizes that there may be a problem. You may wish to ask someone close to you whether they are aware of any difficulties you may be having, and how it is affecting them. Many hearing care professionals prefer that you bring a spouse, family member or friend to the visit. If hearing instruments are recommended, it is helpful to have someone present who would be involved in that decision process, to participate in the consultation.

Next Steps

Your hearing care professional can advise you about the nature of your hearing loss and recommend next steps. Fortunately, there are many ways to help people with hearing loss.

Only about 5% hearing loss in adults can be improved by medication or surgery. Hearing instruments can help most people with hearing loss. It is easy to try a hearing instrument right in the office or at home. Wearing hearing instruments can improve your quality of life.





It's never too late to make a positive difference in your life.
Contact your hearing care professional today.