



Age-related hearing loss

Age-related hearing loss – also known as *presbycusis* - refers to the gradual deterioration in hearing.

This hearing loss is permanent and usually affects both ears equally. A number of factors can contribute to presbycusis, including genetics, the environment, medical conditions, free radicals and internal DNA damage.

Signs and symptoms

Because presbycusis develops gradually, it is often friends and family of the person, who notice the hearing loss first.

Their experiences of presbycusis may include:

- Needing to repeat themselves regularly.
- A feeling that they are being ignored.
- Having to interpret conversations or dialogue on TV.



Similarly, the person with presbycusis may report the following experiences:

- Difficulty hearing in the presence of background noise.
- Noticing many people seem to mumble.
- Difficulty understanding people who speak softly, quickly, or people with accents.
- Difficulty understanding people when they are not facing you.

You are not alone

If these signs and symptoms sound familiar, you are not alone. More than 50% of Australians aged 61-70 experience a hearing loss in at least one ear, and this figure rises to nearly 75% of Australians aged 71 and over.

Your Lions Hearing Clinic audiologist can help with a full hearing assessment to determine the nature and severity of your hearing loss. At the end of the consultation they will give you a full explanation of the results and discuss options for improving your communication.



So what can be done?

Presbycusis is a permanent loss of hearing. Your audiologist will be able to recommend ways of improving your hearing depending on the degree and type of hearing loss.

- In the early stages of presbycusis you may benefit from simply adopting some listening strategies to help supplement your hearing in the more difficult listening situations.
- If your hearing loss has progressed further, you are likely to get the most benefit from hearing aids, assistive listening devices, or a combination of the two.
- For most people with presbycusis, the best solution for their hearing loss are hearing aids.

Your audiologist will prescribe hearing aids based on your hearing loss and lifestyle to improve the audibility of lost sounds.

Assistive listening devices (ALDs)

Sometimes hearing aids aren't enough. In these situations an ALD may be beneficial to improve hearing in difficult situations.

These include:

- amplified telephones
- alerting systems such as bedshakers (for example, if a smoke alarm goes off or the doorbell rings)
- headphones for watching TV
- FM systems

ALDs may all be used independently or to supplement hearing aids.