



What Happens During an Audiological Assessment (Hearing Test)?

When you arrive for a hearing test the audiologist will ask you in detail about problems you may have experienced with your hearing, such as difficulty hearing in noisy situations or when watching TV. Try to give some thought to the problems you've been having, and in what situations, before arriving for the test. It's very helpful to bring a family member or friend along with you; they are often more aware of the areas of difficulty than you may be yourself and can provide moral support.

You will also be asked about relevant medical history, including problems such as tinnitus, pain in the ears and so on.

Before conducting the test, the audiologist will examine your ears (a process known as otoscopy) to check for excessive wax, conditions that may require medical attention or factors that may influence the conduct of the hearing test.

The hearing test itself typically takes 15 to 30 minutes; you will listen to a series of "beeps" and press a button each time you hear one. The tests are conducted over a range of frequencies, from low pitch to high pitch, and over a range of intensities (volume) in order to find the quietest sound that you can hear at each pitch. A second test, using a different headset, will be used to determine if any problems exist in the bones of the middle ear or the ear drum itself.

Depending on the outcome of the initial tests, sometimes it is necessary to carry out further tests to obtain more detail; consequently, the test can sometimes take up to half an hour. It is important to allow plenty of time for the tests, and also time to ask any questions you may have.

Once the tests have been completed, the audiologist will explain the results to you in the context of any hearing difficulties you have. You will also be given a summary of the type and level of hearing loss you may be experiencing. If any further items requiring medical attention are identified as part of this process, this will be explained to you at this point also.

If appropriate, the audiologist will then explain what options are available to assist with your hearing and how best to proceed.