



**HEARING
AWARENESS
WEEK
23-29 AUGUST**

**PREVENTION
At home**

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In Australia, hearing loss is more prevalent than all national health priorities except musculoskeletal conditions. This means hearing loss is more common than cardiovascular disease, diabetes mellitus, asthma, cancer and mental health. ¹

ONE IN SIX AUSTRALIANS have a hearing impairment

The number of Australians with a hearing loss is increasing because of noise injury; accidents; the environment; the ageing of the Australian population. Family history and other factors can also lead to hearing impairment, e.g. being male, having diabetes, and being a smoker.

Even if you already have some hearing loss, you can protect what's left.

Always wear earplugs or earmuffs when using home handyman equipment, mowing the lawn, or using a leaf blower.

Make sure your birthing hospital provides a hearing test for your newborn.

Protect children from excessive noise and dangerously noisy toys.

Download a noise limiter from the internet to ensure you don't accidentally put the volume up too loud when using a personal stereo player.

If you are listening to a personal stereo player and someone else can hear your music, it is probably up too loud.

During Hearing Awareness Week, there are opportunities to check your hearing for free and find out more information ways to protect your hearing and prevent further damage.

Visit the Event calendar at www.hearingawarenessweek.org.au to find out what is happening near you.





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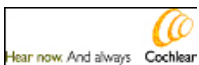


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Background information

In 2005 it was estimated that 3.55 million Australians had some form of hearing loss.

- Children (0-14 years) – 10,268
- Adults (15 years and over) - 3,534,963 of that 49.5% were of working age (15-64 years) and 64% of people were over 60 years with 37% aged 70 years or more.

People often wait 7-10 years before they seek help for their hearing (from when they first notice).

In the meantime, they might turn the TV up so loud that others complain or ask you to repeat yourself, etc. They might miss important conversations with their families. They may mishear what their doctor says and have trouble hearing a shop assistant tell them how much money they have to pay.

Hearing tests can be free for eligible people.

Hearing screening is also available in many States for newborn babies. This usually happens at the hospital in the first couple of days after birth. Ask your birthing hospital if they do the test and challenge them if they don't. Catching a hearing loss early gives your child a better chance.

By the time children are at school acquired hearing loss increases to 3.2 in every one thousand live births.¹

Visit your local consumer organisation to get information and practical assistance to learn how to cope with your hearing loss. Organisations such as Better Hearing Australia, Self-help for Hard of Hearing (SHHH) and Deaf Societies are all places where you can get assistance, and there are many more. See <http://www.deafnessforum.org.au/links.htm#consumer> for further details.

¹ Access Economics: Listen Hear! The economic impact and cost of hearing loss in Australia, February 2006