



WHAT TO EXPECT AT YOUR AUDIOLOGY APPOINTMENT

FACT SHEET

If you've not been to an audiologist or audiometrist before, here's what to expect at your appointment.

Your clinician should involve you (and significant others as much as you want them to be) in the decisions around your care. You should expect your clinician to communicate with you in a way that is understandable for you. Your clinician should encourage you to take action regarding your hearing condition. At the same time, they should ensure that they really understand your thoughts, feelings and needs so that your journey is driven by you, not by their own agenda. The use of some simple evidence-based tools such as those produced by the Ida Institute can be very helpful in ensuring you receive the most effective support: https://idainstitute.com/tools/motivation_tools

WHAT USUALLY HAPPENS IN THE FIRST APPOINTMENT?

The appointment itself will start with taking your hearing history, which provides the audiologist with information about your hearing and general health. This also gives you an opportunity to share your story. Then the audiologist will take a look in your ears with an otoscope to check for any wax buildup or other problems that might prevent the test from going ahead.

The test itself is done in a quiet soundproofed booth or room. You wear either headphones or insert earphones (foam earplug-like headphones that are inserted into the ear canal), and you listen to sounds under the headphones while the audiologist sits at a machine called an audiometer. This machine controls the output sound, in a very precise way, so that the audiologist can control the exact pitch and volume of each sound they play, and direct it to one ear or the other. Your job is to indicate every time you hear a sound, usually by pressing a hand-held response button. The audiologist will reduce the volume of the tone until you can no longer detect the sound. The softest volume at which you can reliably detect the tone is called a hearing threshold. It is recorded on a graph called an audiogram. The audiologist will perform this same procedure for a range of different pitches of sound and in your left and right ear until the audiogram is complete.

In addition to tones, the audiologist may also present words or sentences to you and ask you to repeat the words. Your answers are scored by the clinician. Depending on how

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HEARING LINE

1300 242 842

For hearing, social & emotional support, & general enquiries, Monday to Friday, 9am - 5pm

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“ ”

I'd been living with hearing loss for a long time, but I suddenly realised I had tinnitus too. The audiologist played a warbled sound instead of a tone, which helped. The test showed my hearing had dropped in the upper frequencies, as you would expect for a misspent youth listening to loud music – Steve

complex your hearing test it, the whole process can take anywhere from 10 minutes to over 30 minutes.

Sometimes the audiologist may also perform a test called tympanometry. This test measures the mobility of your eardrum and how well ventilated your middle ear space (behind the eardrum) is. This involves the audiologist placing a plug in your ear while the pressure is slightly increased and decreased. This test requires you to sit still, but doesn't require any response from you and only takes a minute or so to complete.

At the end of the assessment, the clinician will explain the results and offer some recommendations on next steps. You will work together to set some goals, and have a discussion about what options are available that are a good fit for your needs.

Follow this link to watch a useful video about what to expect at your first hearing test appointment: <https://youtu.be/9u9Ja4wyUaU>

In some clinics that also provide rehabilitation/device fitting, you may be offered device options, including a quote for services, that are suitable for your needs. If you agree to proceed with a device fitting on the day, and depending on the device selected, the clinician may take an ear impression to have an earmold made that precisely and comfortably can sit in your ear.

Remember, you do not need to agree to proceed with the recommendations provided to you on the day. You can take the time you need to make the informed decision that's right for you. You may benefit from our other fact sheets: <https://soundfair.org.au/hearing-information-sheets/>

This factsheet is intended to be a guide of a general nature, having regard to general circumstances. The information presented should not be relied on as a substitute for medical advice, independent judgement or assessment by a healthcare professional, with consideration of the particular needs and individual circumstances. This factsheet reflects information available at the time of its preparation, but its currency should be determined having regard to other available information. Soundfair disclaims all liability to users of the information provided.

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