

# Hearing Loss Terminology



Deaf Children  
Australia



## Hearing Loss Terminology

When you are discussing hearing loss you may hear some of the following words used:

### **High-frequency versus low-frequency:**

The person can either hear high-pitched or low-pitched sounds better.

### **Bilateral versus unilateral:**

Bilateral means hearing loss or hearing aids in both ears. Unilateral means hearing loss or hearing aid in one ear.

### **Symmetrical versus asymmetrical:**

Symmetrical means that both ears have the same severity and the audiograms have the same shape of hearing loss. Asymmetrical means each ear has a different severity and audiogram shape.

### **Progressive versus sudden hearing loss:**

Progressive hearing loss becomes worse over time. Sudden hearing loss happens quickly. You should see your doctor right away if you have a sudden hearing loss.

### **Fluctuating versus stable hearing loss:**

Fluctuating hearing loss varies over time and can go up or down. Stable hearing loss does not vary and the audiogram shape is consistent.

### **Behind the ear/ in the ear hearing aids:**

Behind the ear hearing aids is where you have a mould in your ear and the hearing aid sits behind the ear. In the ear hearing aids sit in the ear.

### **Cochlear Implant:**

A cochlear implant is an electronic medical device that replaces the function of the damaged inner ear. Unlike hearing aids, which make sounds louder, cochlear implants do the work of damaged parts of the inner ear (cochlea) to provide sound signals to the brain.

## **For further information about Deaf Children Australia.**

**[www.deafchildrenaustralia.org.au](http://www.deafchildrenaustralia.org.au)**

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Deaf Children Australia uses the term 'deaf' to refer to all degrees and types of hearing loss.

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