

HEARING LOSS IN ONE EAR

Information for families
and caregivers



When someone has a hearing difference in one ear, it is called unilateral hearing loss.

Unilateral hearing loss can vary from mild to profound.

Respect for Identities

We respect the terms people use to identify themselves. People may self-identify as deaf, hard of hearing, a person with hearing loss, a person with a hearing difference, etc. You might see the phrase “deaf and hard of hearing (DHH),” used in an all-inclusive manner. You might also see the words “hearing loss” when talking about a medical diagnosis.

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How can I support my child with a unilateral hearing loss or difference?

See your child’s audiologist

Visit your child’s audiologist regularly to check your child’s hearing. The audiologist will tell you how often you should come back, depending on your child’s situation. If your child is very young, you might be asked to return more often.

Your audiologist will also be able to talk to you about hearing technology, if desired.

Next Appointment:

My audiologist’s recommendation:

Treat ear infections



If you think your child may have an ear infection affecting either ear, get medical help quickly!

Use hearing protection



Protect your child’s ears from noise-induced hearing loss. Use hearing protection (earplugs or earmuffs) when your child is exposed to loud sounds or music.

Use good communication strategies



Reduce background noise to enhance your child’s access to communication. Ways you can do this are getting closer to your child and using a well-lit space to take full advantage of visual cues.

Monitor language development



Make sure your child is meeting language milestones. Check in with an educational professional every 6 months to make sure your child is making expected progress.

Seven of 10 Minnesota families enroll their infant/young child with unilateral hearing loss in early intervention through their school district.

One in 10 Minnesota children initially identified with unilateral hearing loss developed hearing loss in the other ear.

Why is it important to manage my child's unilateral hearing loss?

Safety



Having a hearing difference between ears can make it more difficult to know what direction sound is coming from.

Helping your child use all of their senses, including vision, will help them when they are learning to be safe in the community.

Learning



Hearing differences can impact language development and learning. Studies have consistently suggested children with unilateral

hearing loss are at greater risk of developing language delays and learning difficulties when compared to children with typical hearing.

Listening Effort and Fatigue



Your child may have difficulty hearing people talking on the side of their unilateral hearing loss, or in a noisy place, like a classroom or playground.

They might miss parts of what is said – at a distance, in noise, or when they aren't facing the speaker. They also may find it hard to hear directions or understand someone who is speaking quietly. Your child might have increased listening effort and fatigue in these situations which can lead to frustration and changes in behavior.



What about hearing devices?



If desired, your audiologist can help you understand possible technology options. The options available will depend on your child's needs and hearing level. Your audiologist can access a state loaner device program.

Examples of hearing technologies are hearing aids, bone conduction devices, cochlear implants, remote microphone systems, and other classroom-wide speaker systems.

Connect with us

Minnesota Hands & Voices

Connect with other parents of children who are deaf and hard of hearing.

651-265-2435 (Voice Only)
MNHV@lssmn.org
www.lssmn.org/mnhandsandvoices

Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI)

Learn more about Minnesota's EHDI program and explore additional resources.

www.health.mn.gov/improveEhdi
MDH/CYSHN
PO Box 64975,
St. Paul, MN 55164-0975

To obtain this information in a different format, call 651-201-3650

Free educational programs to support your child's development

Help Me Grow

Children with a unilateral hearing loss may be eligible to receive free early intervention from their school district through Help Me Grow. A provider from your local district can work with you to make a plan. Children older than age 5 can be connected through their elementary school.

1-866-693-GROW (4769)
www.helpmegrowmn.org



Follow Along Program

Track your child's development to see if they are growing and behaving like other children the same age.

www.health.state.mn.us/mnfap

