

Children's Ear Nose & Throat Center

Sub-specialists of Dell Children's Medical Center of Central Texas

A member of the  Seton Healthcare Family

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Hearing Loss

Conductive Hearing Loss

Conductive hearing loss is due to dysfunction of the outer or middle ear. Conductive hearing loss can often be medically corrected

Sensorineural Hearing Loss

Sensorineural Hearing Loss is caused by damage to the cochlea or VIII cranial nerve. It can be congenital (present at birth) or acquired (illness, injury, or noise-induced). The degree of loss can be mild to profound and is typically not medically reversible.

Mixed Hearing Loss

Mixed Hearing Loss has both conductive and sensorineural components.

Causes of Hearing Loss

- Congenital hearing loss has a genetic cause in more than 50% of cases. Other causes of congenital hearing loss include prenatal infections, illnesses, toxins consumed by the mother during pregnancy, or other conditions occurring around the time of birth
- Acquired sensorineural hearing loss can be caused by ototoxic medications, meningitis, head injury and noise exposure
- Acquired conductive hearing loss can be caused by foreign objects in the ear canal, fluid in the middle ear, or involvement of the middle ear bones (ossicles).

Signs, Symptoms and Risk Factors for Hearing Loss

All newborns undergo a Universal Newborn Hearing Screen prior to leaving the hospital.

Therefore, congenital hearing loss is often diagnosed soon after birth. However, parents should be aware that hearing loss may be acquired later. The following are risk factors and symptoms of hearing loss:

- The child has a family member who has already been identified as having hearing loss
- The infant does not startle or cry at loud, sudden noises
- The child does not respond to his or her name when called from behind
- There is a delay in language comprehension and/or language expression.