

Audiology Abbreviations

Some people leave their healthcare professional's office confused by what was said. Did you ever feel that you were confused by abbreviations and acronyms (abbreviations made by combining the initial letters or syllables of several words)? Unfortunately, some professionals use confusing abbreviations that do not help the communication process between patient and professional.

A working explanation for each abbreviation should be given by your audiologist, because many of the abbreviations involve complex concepts. A list of all the abbreviations used in audiology would be very lengthy, but a simple classifying of basic hearing test areas where technical abbreviations are typically used may help patients. Here are four basic hearing and/or ear test classifications that you may experience when being seen by an audiologist with a few commonly associated abbreviations within each classification:

1. Hearing testing in using pure tones: Pure tone testing provides information about the faintest tones a person hears at selected low to high pitches (frequencies).

- AD: right ear
- AC audiometry: air conduction audiometry
- BC audiometry: bone conduction audiometry
- AS: left ear
- dB: decibel
- dBHL: decibel hearing level
- dB SPL: decibel sound pressure level
- dBHTL: decibel hearing threshold level
- HF: high frequency
- HL: hearing level
- HTL: hearing threshold level
- Hz: hertz (and kHz: kilohertz)
- LF: low frequency
- PTA: pure tone audiometry
- SPL: sound pressure level

2. Hearing testing using speech: Speech audiometry provides information about discriminating spoken words.

- AP: auditory perception
- APD: auditory processing disorder



ASK QUESTIONS: Medical abbreviations can be confusing. Ask your audiologist to explain any terms you don't understand.

- SAT: speech awareness threshold
- SPIN: speech detection in noise
- UCL: uncomfortable loudness level
- PB max: highest word recognition score using phonetically balanced word lists

3. Middle ear functioning: Immittance or tympanometry is basically an examination used to test the condition of the eardrum, middle ear and Eustachian tube.

- AR: acoustic reflex
- ART: acoustic reflex threshold
- HTL: hearing threshold level
- TM: tympanic membrane
- PVT: physical volume test
- SPL: sound pressure level

4. Otoacoustic Emissions: Otoacoustic emissions are sounds that are produced by healthy ears in response to sound stimulations.

- OAE: otoacoustic emissions
- TEOAE or TrOAE: transient-evoked OAE
- DPOAE: distortion product OAE

Abbreviations are shortcut letters that are used to communicate complex clinical audiology concepts. While they are commonly used by professionals, they can sometimes confuse patients. It is important to ask your audiologist to explain abbreviations in order fully understand the meaning of professionally used abbreviations.

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