

# Communication in Noisy Conditions

**NOISE DURING COMMUNICATION EXCHANGES** between two people may be described as any auditory or visual interference that impacts the quality and quantity of the transmission and/or the reception of information. Examples of noise that can interfere with communication are machines operating, music playing, ongoing traffic noise, multiple people talking, people moving, and distracting lights. The impact of noise may be most apparent during day-to-day communication activities, such as face-to-face and telephone conversations.

Even for normally hearing listeners, surrounding noise may cause communication problems; however, for people who have a hearing loss, listening to speech in noise is likely the most problematic communication condition they routinely experience.

## Testing for Hearing in Noise Problems

The degree to which people have problems listening to speech in noise may be measured. Audiologists, after at least a basic evaluation has been completed, have the knowledge and experience to test a person's

## Treating Hearing in Noise Problems

For listeners with hearing in noise problems, the following are a few options that an audiologist may recommend to a patient.

*For listeners who wear hearing aids:*

- Use two hearing aids rather than one hearing aid. Normally hearing listeners use both ears to enhance listening to speech in noisy conditions.

- Use a hearing aid microphone that is highly directional. Directional microphones help to improve signal reception.

**If you are having trouble hearing speech in noisy conditions, an audiologist can help you identify your problems and find solutions to improve your quality of life.**

ability to hear and discriminate speech in noise. The testing used by audiologists simulates excellent to poor listening conditions that a person may experience and compares the patient's responses in these conditions to the responses from a random sample of normally hearing listeners. The test results provide a measure of the types of problems and the degree of problems a listener is likely experiencing during everyday listening conditions. Accurately identifying listening problems is the first step in finding the help that is needed to improve a person's quality of life.

- Use hearing aids with enhanced digital signal processing. Digital processing helps to reduce the impact of some unwanted sounds.

*For anyone:*

- Use an auditory training device during controlled listening conditions. These devices are typically used in meetings, conferences and classrooms. The speaker wears a transmitting device and the listener wears a receiving device.

- Use skills learned during auditory training. Audiologists and teachers of the deaf/



hard of hearing provide communication strategies, such as listening, watching and positioning, that help listeners more fully use conditional cues to enhance the reception of communication.

## Living with Hearing in Noise Problems

The first goal for a person having problems hearing speech in noise is to seek help from an audiologist. The second goal is to work with the audiologist to identify the problems that a listener may have hearing and discriminating speech in noisy conditions. Lastly, the patient and audiologist work together to find strategic and possibly electronic solutions to improve the quality of life the listener deserves to enjoy. [Lipsum](#)

## REFERENCES

1. Communication Sciences and Disorders, The Pennsylvania State University. Accessed online at <http://csd.hhdev.psu.edu/clinic/audiology.html>.

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