

Conductive hearing loss

Information for patients

This sheet answers common questions about conductive hearing loss. If you would like further information, or have any particular worries, please do not hesitate to ask your audiologist or doctor.

What is conductive hearing loss?

Your ear is made up of three sections; the outer, middle and inner ear. Conductive hearing loss occurs when there is an obstruction (blockage) in the outer or middle ear that prevents sound from passing through them properly. This type of hearing loss can be treated or managed depending on what is causing the conductive impairment.

What causes conductive hearing loss?

There are many reasons a person could have conductive hearing loss:

- a foreign body in the ear canal/s
- impacted wax in the ear canal/s
- fluid in the middle ear due to colds or allergies (otitis media)
- an ear infection
- a hole in the ear drum/s (perforation)
- eustachian tube dysfunction
- abnormal growth in the ear canal/s
- abnormal formation of the outer ear (atresia/microtia)
- damage to the bones in the middle ear
- failed surgery

What happens next?

In most cases, conductive hearing loss can be successfully managed by treating the underlying cause.

For example, blockage in the ear canal due to wax can be treated by having wax removed. If there is fluid in the ear, antibiotics may be prescribed by your GP to help resolve the infection. In some cases, the use of a hearing aid or hearing aids can be beneficial to help with the transmission of sound.

If a conventional hearing aid fails to provide any benefit, the use of a bone anchored hearing aid (BAHA) is an option. More information regarding a BAHA can be provided upon request; please do not hesitate to contact your audiologist for further assistance.

Who can I speak to if I have any more questions?

The audiology department can be reached by telephone or email as follows:

- **Telephone:** 020 8375 1117 or 020 8216 4912
- **Email address:** RF-TR.AudiologyAdmin@nhs.net

More information

For more information about the audiology service at the Royal Free London, please visit our website: www.royalfree.nhs.uk/services/services-a-z/audiology

Your feedback

If you have any feedback on this leaflet or for a list of references for it, please email: rf.communications@nhs.net

Alternative formats

This leaflet is also available in large print. If you need this leaflet in another format – for example Braille, a language other than English or audio – please speak to a member of staff.

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