

Unilateral Hearing Loss

What is unilateral hearing loss?

Unilateral, or one-sided, hearing loss is a decrease in hearing in one ear. This can be due to damage, disease or malformation of the outer, middle or inner ear. Children with hearing loss in one ear may find it hard to:

- Locate the source of sounds
- Understand speech in a noisy area
- Pay attention and follow directions or discussions in a noisy area
- Do reading, writing and spelling schoolwork

What can I do to help my child?

The following guidelines will help minimize potential problems for your child.

Hearing health care

- Get your child's hearing tested each year.
- Get prompt treatment for ear infections to avoid temporary hearing loss in your child's better hearing ear.
- If you suspect your child has progressive hearing loss, have their hearing evaluated right away.
- Always protect your child's ears with earplugs or earmuffs during activities with high levels of noise, such as loud music, firearms, snowmobiling, fireworks and lawn mowing.
- Always protect your child during activities where they could hurt their head. Have your child wear a helmet when bike riding, snow skiing, snow boarding, skate boarding, etc. Add mirrors to your child's bike to make riding it safer.
- It may be hard for your child to locate where sounds are coming from. It is important to teach your child how to cross busy streets, looking left, right and left again, and to use crosswalks.

Communication strategies

- Always get your child's attention before you start talking with them or give instructions.
- Be aware of your child's good ear and position them so their best ear is facing the person speaking.
- Rephrase rather than repeat statements and instructions if your child misunderstands.
- Tell teachers and classroom aides about your child's hearing loss.
- Have your child sit close to the teacher, with their good ear directed toward the instructor.
- Stay aware of how your child is doing in school.
- Check in with the teacher and ask questions.

To Learn More

- Otolaryngology 206-987-2105
- Audiology 206-987-5173
- Ask your child's healthcare provider
- seattlechildrens.org

Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line, 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.

S-P-E-E-C-H may help you to remember steps for easier communication:

S - State the topic to be discussed before starting a conversation.

P - Pace your conversation at a moderate rate and normal loudness. Pause occasionally to help your child understand.

E - Enunciate and pronounce words clearly. Don't exaggerate your lip movements.

E - Enthusiastically communicate, using natural body language and gestures.

CH - Check with your child to make sure they understand your message before changing topics.

Speech and Language Assessment

Your child's speech and language should be evaluated so that any problems with speech and language can be found early. Prompt intervention may help reduce problems in school.

Amplification Options

Your child might be eligible to use a hearing aid or assistive listening device. Talk with your child's audiologist about amplification options as some devices require clearance from an ear doctor. Examples of options include:

- Use of an amplification system in the classroom, such as a wireless soundfield or ear level FM/DM system
- Use of CROS hearing aids. These hearing aids route sound from poorer ear to the better ear
- Use of a hearing aid for the hearing-impaired ear
- Use of a bone conduction sound processor (BCSP)

If you have any questions or concerns, please call:

Healthcare provider: _____

Nurse: _____

Audiologist: _____