

#HarBacchaSunega



Promoting **Healthy Hearing**
for **Children**

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Over 1 lakh babies are born every year in India with severe to profound hearing loss.*

**Hear Their World:
Early Detection, Early Action**
Let's Ensure No Child is Left Unheard

#HarBacchaSunega #NationalHearingWeek

Understanding Hearing Loss & its Impact on children:

Hearing connects us to the world, and it's important to protect it. In India almost 63 million people suffer from significant hearing loss which is about 6.3% of the population. It is estimated that 4 out of 1000 children in India suffer from severe to profound hearing loss. About 30 in 1,000 Indian school-aged children have hearing issues, which may be temporary or permanent. In young children under 3 years of age, hearing loss is often missed, however it can have a profound effect on their growth, development, learning, and ability to communicate if nothing is done about it. Without hearing a child cannot develop speech and language. Untreated hearing loss in children can delay or significantly impact speech, affect education and cause social isolation in later life.*

Types of Hearing Loss in Children:

Congenital and Acquired

- **Congenital Hearing Loss** refers to hearing impairment present at birth or acquired shortly after birth
- **Acquired hearing loss** refers to hearing impairment that develops after birth, due to various environmental, medical, or lifestyle factors.

Causes of Congenital Hearing loss:

- **Genetic Factors:** Passed down from parents, often without a family history of hearing loss.
- **Infections During Pregnancy:** Rubella, cytomegalovirus, or toxoplasmosis.
- **Birth Complications:** Premature birth, low birth weight, or lack of oxygen at birth.
- **Maternal Health:** Diabetes, certain medications, or drug/alcohol use during pregnancy.

Causes of Acquired Hearing loss :

- **Noise-induced:** Exposure to loud noises, such as machinery, music, or explosions, and prolonged exposure to noise.
- **Infections:** Recurrent or chronic ear infections such as Otitis Media, meningitis and viral infections such as measles, mumps, and cytomegalovirus.
- **Ototoxic medicines:** Certain medicines could damage the inner ear or auditory nerve and cause hearing loss.
- **Head or ear trauma:** Injury to the head or ear.
- **Other Diseases & Medical Conditions:** Diseases such as meniere's disease, autoimmune ear diseases, diabetes and certain tumours.

- **Blockages or Obstructions:** Accumulation of earwax (cerumen) and foreign objects in the ear canal.

How can parents identify signs of hearing loss in children?

In Infants (0-1 Year)

- Does not react to loud sounds.
- Does not respond to your voice or sounds by 6 months.
- Does not babble or imitate sounds by 9-12 months.

In Toddlers (1-3 Years)

- Delayed speech or unclear words.
- Does not follow simple instructions.
- Fails to recognize familiar sounds or voices.

In preschool & school-age Children (3 years & above)

- Turns up the TV or music volume too high.
- Struggles to follow verbal instructions.
- Frequently asks, "What?" or "Can you repeat that?"
- Poor academic performance or inattentiveness in class.
- Avoids social interactions or becomes easily frustrate.

How can an ENT specialist detect Hearing Loss in Children:

Early diagnosis is crucial for effective treatment.

Common diagnostic tests include:

- **Newborn Hearing Screening:** Perform shortly after birth.
- **Auditory Brainstem Response (ABR):**
Measures the auditory nerve's response to sound.
- **Otoacoustic Emission (OAE):** Detects inner ear function.
- **Behavioral Tests:** For older children, methods like visual reinforcement audiometry (ages 6-36 months) or conditioned play audiometry (ages 24-60 months) are used.

How can Hearing Loss in Children be managed ?

- **Hearing Aids:** Amplify sound for better hearing.
- **Cochlear Implants:** Surgical devices for severe cases that bypass damaged parts of the ear.
- **Speech & Language Therapy:**
Helps in developing communication skills.
- **Educational Support:** Special seating arrangements, classroom aids, and tailored learning programs.

How to Prevent Hearing Loss in Children ?

- Visit ENT doctors for regular checkups and if any signs of hearing loss are identified.
- Timely vaccinations (e.g., measles, mumps, rubella).
- Protection against loud noises.
- Early treatment of maternal infections during pregnancy.

How can parents cope better if their child has hearing loss ?

- Regular appointments and interactions with ENT specialists, audiologists, speech therapists and land educators.
- Ensure a supportive home and school environment.
- Learn communication methods like sign language or lip reading if necessary.
- Use assistive devices like closed-captioned TVs and vibrating alarm clocks.

When should you seek help ?

It is very important that your child is seen by an ENT specialist immediately if you notice any signs of hearing loss. Early and urgent intervention could significantly improve their hearing, allow normal speech and social development and make a significant difference to their quality of life.

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www.nationalhearingweek.org

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