

Dear Mr/Ms,

Making the decision to have your hearing tested is the first step towards improving your quality of life. Visiting the Audiologist is a huge step towards better hearing – and it is easier than what you might think. It does not take long. It does not hurt. Remember to take someone with you to keep you company and to help you remember what is being said.

Even though hearing loss is one of the most common health problems, it is unfortunately one of the most ignored problems too. This is very unfortunate since it affects your ability to participate fully in life. By taking this step, you will firstly learn whether you have a hearing loss, and if necessary what the variety of solutions are for your specific problem. If a hearing loss is addressed appropriately, you will enjoy vast improvements in their social, emotional, psychological and physical well-being.

Before the appointment, it is a good idea to make some notes regarding your family life, social life and hobbies that you can relay to the Health Care Professional. Also consider some specific situations in which you might like to hear more clearly.

Lots of people have difficulty hearing speech in noisy places such as meeting rooms, parties, restaurants, supermarkets, etc. Once you have decided which situations are important, list them in order of priority, ready to discuss with your Hearing Care Professional.

### **BACKGROUND ON HOW THE EAR FUNCTIONS**

The human ear is a precisely tuned system with a sensitivity and range that outperforms the most elaborate sound system ever manufactured. The ear contains many physiological mechanisms, and a breakdown or disruption in any of these can result in hearing difficulties. The ear is made out of three different parts:

***The outer ear:*** The shape of the outer ear helps to collect the sound waves and direct them through the auditory canal to the eardrum.

***The middle ear:*** This part contains the eardrum and the three smallest bones in your body: the hammer, anvil and stirrup (also called the malleus, incus and stapes). These transfer the sound waves to the inner ear.

***The inner ear:*** Sound waves are changed into electrical impulses by the cochlea. There are tiny sensory cells along the entire length of the fluid-filled cochlea. The cochlea transmits the message via the nerve fibers to the area of the brain in charge of processing and interpreting what we hear.

### **WHAT A HEARING TEST TELLS YOU**

When you visit us, you will be in caring hands. A trained audiologist will be ready to deal with your concerns and provide you with a full hearing check-up. The test itself takes place

in a quiet room or soundproof booth, where you place a headset on and sit comfortably. You will be asked to identify and respond to different sounds.

The audiologist will play a series of pure whistling tones – from bass through to treble – and you will press the button when you are able to hear the sounds. The results of this very simple test will be recorded as an audiogram (a line of o's and x's). He or she will also ask you to repeat some words after them. From these markers they will be able to tell you:

- How much you can hear in each ear
- How well you hear the loudness and pitch of the different sounds
- What impact this has on your ability to communicate
- The possible causes of your hearing loss
- Which structure in the hearing mechanism is damaged or affected

## **THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS IMPROVING YOUR QUALITY OF LIFE**

Making the decision to have your hearing tested is the first step towards improving your quality of life. Take a minute to think about what it would mean to you and your family if you could:

- Hear and understand much more
- Laugh with – and get closer to – the people you love
- Feel relaxed rather than drained after a long conversation
- No longer be embarrassed by misunderstandings or having to ask people to repeat themselves
- Hear and understand the soft voices of children
- Tell where sounds are coming from and know which way to look
- Listen to TV and radio with others at a volume that suits you

Your Audiologist is your partner in your journey to better hearing and improved quality of life, we promise to be there every step of the way and to assist you in every possible way that we can.

Thank you for making the appointment with us, I am looking forward to seeing you.

Best regards

Your Audiologist

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