

## Glossary of Terms

Below is a list of terms used when talking about evaluation or treatment of hearing loss. It is not comprehensive, but hopefully should explain terms used on this website.

**ABR (Auditory Brainstem Response):** an electrophysiologic hearing test where electrodes are placed on the head; sound is presented through earphones while changes in brainwave activity are monitored. Sometimes called BAER (Brainstem Auditory Evoked Response.)

**Aided:** hearing levels obtained using hearing aids or a cochlear implant.

**ASL (American Sign Language):** sign language system often used among deaf adults in the United States. ASL has its own grammatical structure that is different from English.

**Audiologist:** healthcare professional with a Master's or Doctoral degree who is qualified to provide services in prevention, evaluation and (re)habilitation of hearing loss and its associated communication disorder.

**Audiometer:** a specialized instrument used in the measurement of hearing.

**Auditory nerve:** the 8th cranial nerve which transmits sound from the cochlea to the brain.

**Cochlea:** the inner ear which consists of bony and membrane chambers which contain fluids and the sensory cells (hair cells) which send sound from the middle ear to the auditory nerve. Damage to the sensory cells in the inner ear is the most common cause of permanent hearing loss. The inner ear is physically connected to the balance mechanism.

**Cued Speech:** a system of hand positions which a speaker uses near the face and neck designed to help the listener differentiate between similar looking speech sounds.

**dB (Decibel):** a unit of sound intensity which uses a base 10 logarithmic scale. Usually used in conjunction with some reference level.

**dB HL (Decibels Hearing Level):** the notation used on an audiogram where "0 dB HL" represents average or normal hearing in humans.

**ENT:** an ear nose and throat physician. Also called an otolaryngologist or an otorhinolaryngologist.

**Feedback:** the squeal/whistle a hearing aid makes when amplified sound from the receiver reaches the microphone and is re-amplified.

**Huggies:** a flexible plastic tubing and band device to help keep hearing aids

on an infant or young child.

**Huggie Aid:** a huggie which is attached to a length of flexible tubing and attached to a child's clothing to reduce the chance of hearing aids being lost.

**Ossicles:** the 3 small bones of the middle ear (malleus, incus and stapes) which transmit sound from the eardrum to the inner ear.

**OAE (Otoacoustic Emissions):** an electrophysiologic hearing test which measures activity of the cochlea to help determine hearing levels.

**Otitis media:** fluid in the middle ear space where there should be air. The fluid may either be clear sterile fluid or yellowish green with a bacterial infection.

**P.E. tubes:** pressure equalization tubes which are surgically placed in the eardrum by an Otolaryngologist in order to allow chronic or recurring fluid to drain out of the middle ear.

**Pidgin:** American Sign Language signs which are used in English word order.

**Pinna:** the external cartilaginous portion of the ear that holds hearing aids or earrings.

**Signed English:** sign language system that uses signs indicating tense, and plurals in English word order (differs from American Sign Language.)

**Speech/Language Pathologist:** healthcare professional who has a Master's or Doctoral degree with expertise in providing services in prevention, evaluation and rehabilitation of speech and language disorders.

**Speech Reception Threshold:** the quietest sound intensity level where speech can be correctly identified.

**Symmetrical hearing:** hearing that is similar for both ears.

**TDD, TTY:** Telecommunications Device for the Deaf or Teletext Typewriter is a device whereby one person types a message which is transmitted over phone lines to someone with a TDD. Instantaneous communication can take place between 2 parties in an alternating fashion.

**Tympanic membrane:** a graphic representation of middle ear function.

**Unilateral hearing loss:** hearing loss for only one ear.

Audiogram Acronyms:

**VRA:** Visual Reinforced Audiometry

**SAT:** Speech Awareness Threshold

**NBN:** Narrow Band Noise

**WT:** Warble Tone

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