

Unilateral Hearing Loss

Unilateral Hearing Loss (UHL) occurs when a child has normal hearing in one ear and a hearing loss in the other ear. The hearing loss can range from mild to profound in degree and can be conductive, sensorineural, Auditory Neuropathy Spectrum disorder or a combination of all of the above.

Causes of unilateral hearing loss may include congenital abnormalities (e.g. microtia, atresia), genetic causes (e.g. connexion 26) and acquired causes such as viral infection and trauma. In many cases, the reason for unilateral hearing loss is unknown.

A child with Unilateral Hearing Loss (UHL) may have difficulty with:

- Sound localisation - the ability to find where sound is coming from. Sound will appear louder when closer to the better ear. Sounds coming from a variety of directions may be difficult to locate (e.g. when playing in the playground).
- Hearing speech in background noise - A person with UHL will be better able to detect a signal if it is directed to their better ear. A person with UHL is likely to have difficulty separating the important information (speech sounds) from noise present in the background, such as footsteps, or low level conversation.
- Hearing over distance.

Unilateral Hearing Loss (UHL) has the potential to negatively impact:

- Speech and language development
- Social and emotional development
- Educational progress

Management options for Unilateral Hearing Loss (UHL):

There are many management options available depending on the type and severity of unilateral hearing loss. These may include:

- **Aiding the poorer hearing ear**
 - This may help to overcome the difficulties associated with sound localisation, listening in background noise, and hearing at a distance.
 - These options may include traditional behind the ear hearing aids, bone conduction hearing aids, surgical correction, and fully implantable technologies depending on the type and severity of loss.
- **Use of an FM system in the better hearing ear**
- **Early Intervention**
 - Enrolling in an early intervention program allows you to have ongoing support from a team of specialists (speech pathologists, audiologists, teachers of the deaf, ENT Surgeons) who can support your child from birth through to school, and beyond to ensure they reach their full potential.



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