

Hearing Loss (Sudden)



Overview

This is a form of hearing loss that can develop quickly and spontaneously. You may wake up and find that you have lost hearing in one ear, and you may not know why. This can be a frightening and frustrating experience.

Causes

The cause of sudden hearing loss is not always understood. It can develop because of a simple problem such as a buildup of earwax. It may have an obvious cause, such as head trauma, an ear infection or a burst eardrum. It may be linked to a problem that is more difficult to diagnose, such as a tumor or other structural abnormality in your head. And it may be linked to medications and to certain diseases and disorders. The exact cause of your hearing loss may not be found.

Symptoms

Sudden hearing loss can develop over a period of hours or days. Symptoms may include loss of some or all hearing, usually in one ear. You may also feel dizzy. You may hear a ringing in your ear. This is called "tinnitus."

Treatment

Sudden hearing loss may be reversible. Many people who experience sudden hearing loss spontaneously recover some or all of their hearing within a few weeks. You may also benefit from treatment. Treatment options depend on the cause and the severity of your hearing loss. You may benefit from a procedure to remove an obstruction or to treat an abnormality interfering with your hearing. You may benefit from devices such as hearing aids or cochlear implants. These can amplify sound and can help the signals reach your brain. Your healthcare provider can create a care plan that is right for your needs.