



York and Scarborough  
Teaching Hospitals  
NHS Foundation Trust

# **Audiology Tests and Procedures: What to expect from an adult hearing assessment**

Information for patients, relatives and carers

① For more information, please contact:

**Audiology Department**

York and Scarborough Teaching Hospitals

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Email: [yhs-tr.AudiologyAdmin@nhs.net](mailto:yhs-tr.AudiologyAdmin@nhs.net)

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## **Why have I been sent an appointment?**

You have been referred to the Audiology Department by a professional such as your GP, a specialist nurse practitioner, or an Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) doctor. This may be due to you mentioning some issues with your hearing or your ears at your last consultation, or the referrer may feel that a hearing test is necessary for your management. Performing a hearing test can give us lots of useful information about how your hearing system is working, whether you feel like you have problems with your hearing or not.

## **How can a hearing assessment help me?**

Evaluating your hearing ability allows us to:

- Work out what may be causing your symptoms,
- Detect any unusual results which may require further investigation,
- Manage any hearing loss that may be affecting your quality of life,
- Signpost you to appropriate sources of information and advice.

# **What should I know or do before the appointment?**

In order to accurately assess you it is very important that your ears are clear of wax. Your doctor or nurse should check your ears before referring you and let you know if you have wax in your ears. Unfortunately, most GP surgeries no longer perform wax removal so they may suggest some drops to help clear the wax, or private wax removal.

We may not be able to proceed with the assessment if you have wax in your ears. If this is the case, we can refer you for wax removal on the NHS however this will delay your treatment.

Information about getting to your appointment can be found on your appointment letter or by visiting the Trust's website: [www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/our-hospitals](http://www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/our-hospitals). Read your appointment letter carefully as we run clinics at numerous different sites, and we may be unable to see you if you arrive at the wrong place or the wrong time.

New hearing assessments are performed at the following sites:

- York Hospital
- Selby Hospital
- Thirsk Health Centre
- Malton Hospital
- Scarborough Hospital
- Springhill House, Scarborough
- Bridlington Hospital
- Whitby Hospital

We will aim to send you an appointment for the site that is the closest to you, however this may not always be possible depending on appointment availability and waiting times.

If you need assistance for your visit such as hospital transport, interpreting services, a chaperone or assistance from the learning disabilities team please consult your appointment letter. It is also helpful for us to know if you will be attending with an assistance dog.

## **What happens during the assessment?**

Your appointment will last around 45 minutes.

Your appointment will be conducted by a qualified audiologist or by a student audiologist under close supervision.

Various assessments are available but not all of these may be carried out at your appointment. The audiologist will choose the appropriate set of tests depending on the nature of your symptoms and your hearing loss. These are explained in this leaflet.

## **Introductions**

The clinician will introduce themselves and anyone else present in the appointment. They may also ask who you have brought with you if you attend with someone. They will check your details to ensure they have the correct records and that they are up to date. Finally, they will give you a summary of what the appointment will involve, to check this is what you were expecting.

## **History**

The clinician will ask you some questions to better understand your problem. These may include questions about your symptoms, your general health or they may also be about how your problem is affecting you socially or at home. Feel free to give the clinician as much information as possible, as this will help them to create a more personalised management plan.

## **Questionnaires**

You may be asked to complete a questionnaire to assess how you are managing in day-to-day situations and how your hearing problem is affecting you. The clinician will go through this questionnaire with you.

## **Otoscopy**

We use an otoscope (a magnifier with a light) to look into your ears to check for any blockages (including wax) and assess the general health of the ear canal and eardrum.

## **Pure Tone Audiometry**

This is the most common hearing test used for adults and it aims to find the quietest sounds that you can hear (your hearing thresholds) at different pitches (also called frequencies). You are required to wear some earphones. These may be the standard over-the ear type or may be 'insert tips' which fit inside the ear canal. You will be asked to press a button when you hear a sound.

Depending on the results, we may do further testing to determine the type of hearing loss you may have. We will position a headband behind your ear which will play sounds through vibration, directly to your hearing organ. You will not feel these vibrations, but you will hear the tones just like through earphones and you will be asked to press the button when you hear them as before.

## **Tympanometry**

This test helps us to understand if there are any problems with the eardrum, or behind the eardrum (the middle ear). We will insert a small rubber tip into the entrance of the ear and gently change the pressure in the ear canal and record the response. This test is not usually uncomfortable, but it may remind you of the feeling you get when you go up or down a hill. It helps us detect:

- If the eardrum is moving as expected
- If there is any congestion or pressure behind the eardrum
- If there are any holes (perforations) in the eardrum not visible using otoscopy
- If grommets are working (where present)
- If there is any stiffness with one or more of the bones in the middle ear

## **Speech audiometry**

This is a test where words and sentences may be used instead of tones. You will be asked to repeat what you hear. The speech will start at a comfortable level and then get quieter as the test progresses until you can no longer work out what is being said. The test may be performed in quiet or in background noise, and to each ear individually (using earphones) or with both ears working together (using a speaker).



At the end of your appointment, we will explain the results and discuss the treatment options or onward management with you. A report will be sent to your GP or ENT doctor with the results and any decisions taken by you. You will be given an individual management plan summary and contact information at the end of the appointment.

If hearing aids are appropriate, they will be discussed with you at the end of the appointment. The clinician will show you what they will look like and, if you decide to try them, a follow up appointment will be arranged to have them fitted at a later date. Hearing aids are prescribed depending on your individual hearing loss, so they may look different to a friend or family member's hearing aids.

If your hearing loss requires it, we may need to take the impression of your ear to make an earmould. This involves putting some moulding material into your ear for a few minutes until it sets and is not an uncomfortable procedure.

## **Are there any risks from the tests?**

We perform all assessments in line with national and local recommended procedures. All our staff are highly trained, and you will only be assessed by a clinician who has been internally verified as competent to do so. We are proud to hold IQIPS accreditation for routine adult audiology services which is a mark of quality assurance.

Each part of the appointment will be described to you prior to going ahead. The instructions for each procedure will be given and the risks explained. Your verbal consent will be obtained before any procedure is carried out.

Performed in line with the relevant procedures, there are no long-term risks when safely conducting otoscopy, pure tone audiometry, tympanometry, speech testing or impression taking. Your suitability for each procedure will be assessed prior to performing it, and you may be asked specific questions about tinnitus or medical implants.

Some audiological equipment and/or hearing aid accessories can interfere with some medical implants. It is important to let us know if you have a programmable ventriculo-peritoneal (PVP) shunt implant in your brain, or if you have a pacemaker. You should be asked about this prior to any test that may affect it.

You may experience some temporary sensations such as increased awareness of tinnitus, a blocked or pressure sensation, or a cough reflex while we take an impression of the ear, but all of these sensations should subside shortly after the procedure.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the department prior to your appointment or discuss them with the clinician during the appointment. We will not perform a procedure if you do not want us to.

## **Tell us what you think of this leaflet**

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact the Adult Audiology Team, Audiology Department, York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE, telephone 01904 726741 or email [yhs-tr.AdultAudiologyTeam@nhs.net](mailto:yhs-tr.AdultAudiologyTeam@nhs.net).

## **Teaching, training and research**

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community. Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose. You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask you if you would like to be involved in our research.

## **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email [yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net](mailto:yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net).

An answer phone is available out of hours.

# Leaflets in alternative languages or formats

If you would like this information in a different format, including braille or easy read, or translated into a different language, please speak to a member of staff in the ward or department providing your care.

Patient Information Leaflets can be accessed via the Trust's Patient Information Leaflet website:  
[www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/](http://www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/)

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