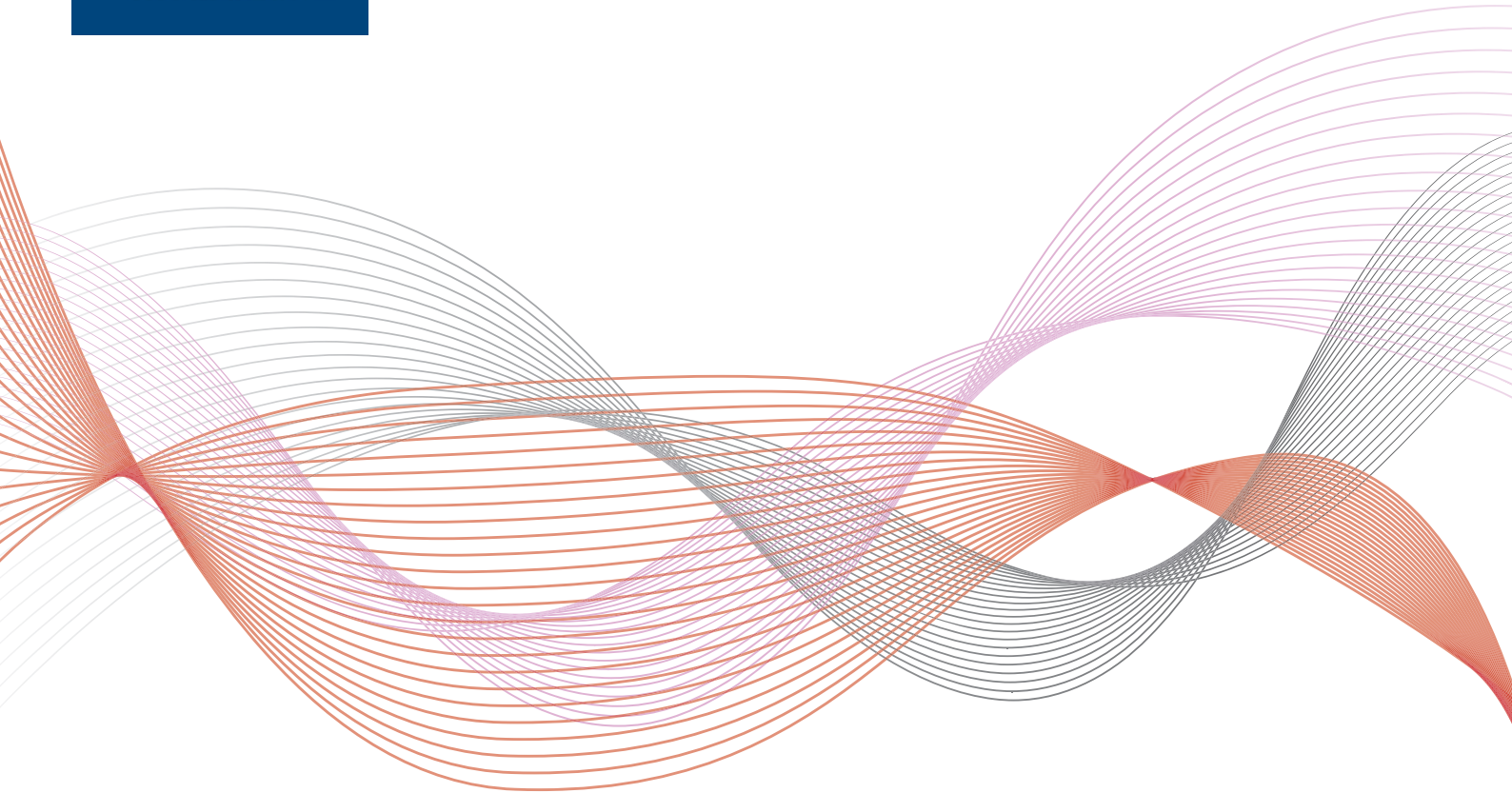




Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry & Health Sciences

## Melbourne Audiology & Speech Pathology Clinic



# Unilateral Hearing Loss or Hearing Loss in Only One Ear

Hearing loss can sometimes occur only in one ear. This can happen slowly over time, or it can be lost quite suddenly.

### HOW DO I KNOW I HAVE A UNILATERAL HEARING LOSS?

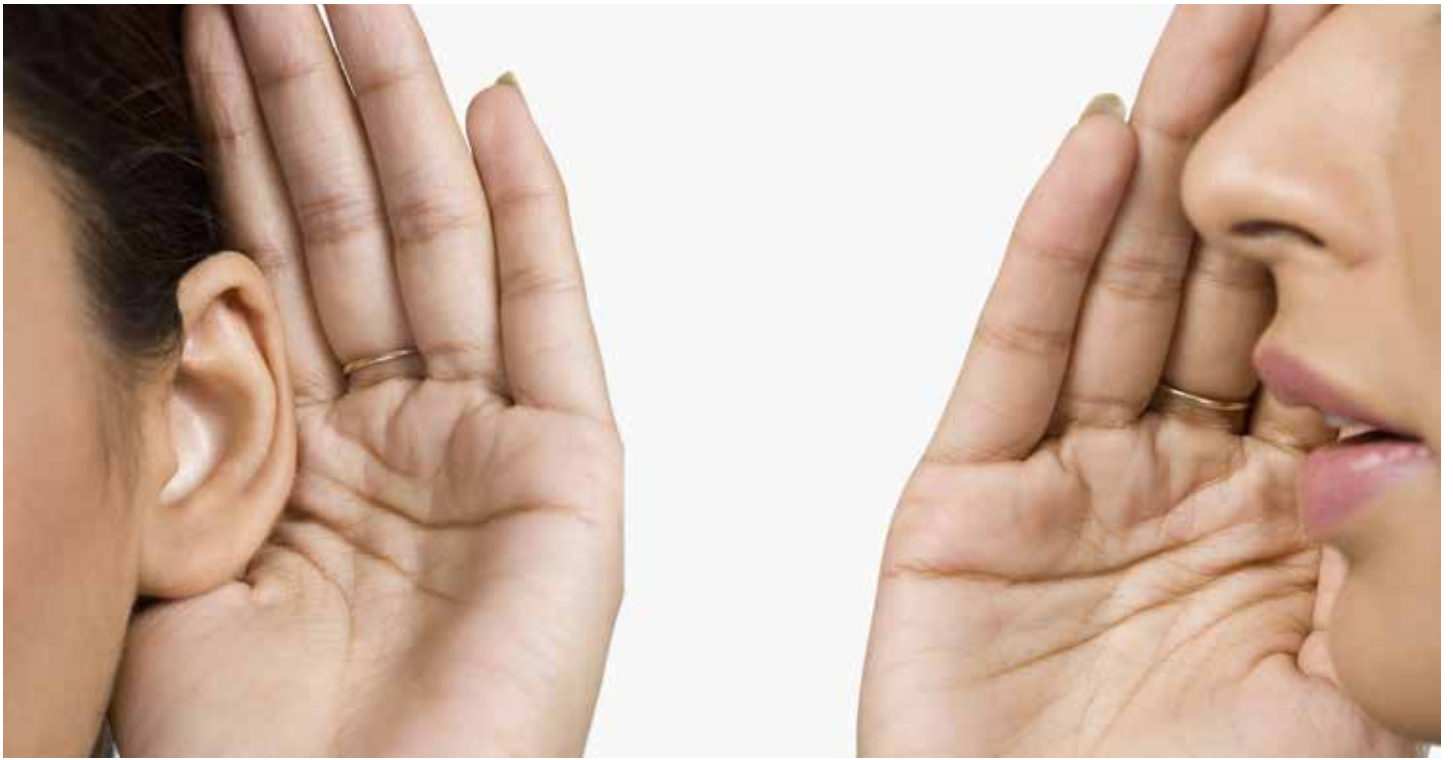
When there is a difference in hearing between two ears it becomes harder to tell where sounds are coming from and to focus on a specific voice in a crowd. You may have noticed difficulties hearing in a noisy environment or in group situations. You may have also noticed that the music you listen to sounds louder in one earphone than the other. Perhaps you can hear your partner better when lying with your head on one side of the pillow. These are all signs of a unilateral hearing loss. Of course, the only way to know this for sure is to have a thorough hearing assessment.

### ONE EAR DEFINITELY HEARS BETTER THAN THE OTHER AT THE MOMENT. WHAT DO I DO NEXT?

If this has happened suddenly (particularly in the past month), we strongly recommend that you call us to arrange an urgent audiology appointment. Just tell our reception team and we can ensure that you are seen quickly.

If this has happened slowly over time, or you remember having it over a few years, we still recommend a hearing assessment to explore what has happened and what can be done.

At your audiology appointment we will check your hearing acuity and work out where the problem may lie. We also assess your ability to hear speech in quiet and noisy conditions, and check on your middle ear function. A report can be provided for your doctor.



## I'VE HAD A HEARING ASSESSMENT. WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT IT?

Referral to an Ear, Nose and Throat Specialist may be required to further investigate any hearing loss. If there has been a sudden drop in hearing, medications are sometimes prescribed to give your hearing the best chance of recovery.

When there is no medical solution to the hearing loss, we can discuss communication strategies to help you communicate more effectively.

There are also different technologies which may assist you. These include:

- **Hearing devices:** Sometimes your hearing may need a boost to give you a sense of balanced hearing, to improve your ability locate sounds or to help you hear in noisy places.
- **CROS/BiCROS hearing devices:** If your hearing is quite poor in the affected ear, we could also use a device similar to a hearing aid to send sounds, from the affected side to your good ear.
- **BAHA/Cochlear Implant:** In some cases a Bone Anchored Hearing Device (BAHA) or a Cochlear Implant could be considered.

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