

## Do You Think You Have a Hearing Loss?

If you think you or someone you know might have a hearing loss, you are not alone. 48 million Americans have a significant hearing loss. (National Health Interview Survey). Statistics tell us that it takes the average person seven years from the time they think they have a hearing loss until the time they seek treatment. Seek treatment for your hearing loss to help minimize the negative impact hearing loss may have on your life.

- *In Kentucky there are nearly 700,000 (16%) deaf and hard of hearing. (2010 American Community Survey Data, United States Census)*

## Signs of Hearing Loss

For most adults, the onset and progression of a hearing loss extends over some time. Family and friends are likely to be the first to notice some difficulty hearing, long before the person does, such as:

- *Misunderstanding people*
- *Asking people to repeat themselves*
- *Difficulties on the telephone*
- *Speaking loudly*
- *Increasing the radio or television volume*



The major complaint of people with hearing loss is the difficulty experienced in comprehending speech in:

- *Group conversations, large family gatherings*
- *Noisy environments, such as restaurants, receptions, in the car or in a plane*
- *Speaking to someone in another room*

These increasing difficulties in hearing may produce conflict with family members, as the family insists on getting help and the person with hearing loss is reluctant to recognize the reality.

For children with a hearing loss, the situation is different. Parents should be on the lookout for delayed or abnormal speech and language development, inattention, and poor school work. Hearing screenings in classrooms are necessary, but not mandated in all states. Ask your pediatrician to do a hearing screening at the annual check-up. If you think you (or your child) is having difficulty hearing, have your hearing checked by an audiologist.

*(Hearing Loss Association of America)*

## Hearing Screening and Hearing Evaluation: Know the Difference

A hearing screening is a quick test that you will pass or fail. If you pass, then you show no signs of hearing loss. If you fail, you will need more in-depth hearing testing. A hearing evaluation is a complete hearing test and requires more education and training. You should see an audiologist for this type of testing.

An audiologist can talk to you about the type of hearing loss you have; how severe it is; what might have caused your hearing loss; and possible treatment options.

*(American Speech-Language-Hearing Association)*

### **KENTUCKY COMMISSION ON THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING**

632 Versailles Road, Frankfort, Kentucky 40601

502-573-2604 V/T \* 800-372-2907 V/T \* 502-416-0607 VP \* 502-573-3594 Fax \* [kcdhh.ky.gov](http://kcdhh.ky.gov)

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