

Types of Hearing Loss

There are three different types of hearing loss.

Conductive hearing loss is caused by injury to, or problems with, the bones, eardrum and membranes, which carry sound from the external ear through the middle ear to the inner ear. This type of hearing loss can sometimes be medically or surgically corrected.

Examples of conditions that may cause a conductive hearing loss include:

- Conditions associated with middle ear pathology such as fluid in the middle ear from colds, allergies (serous otitis media), poor eustachian tube function, ear infection (otitis media), perforated eardrum, benign tumors
- Impacted earwax (cerumen)
- Infection in the ear canal (external otitis)
- Presence of a foreign body
- Absence or malformation of the outer ear, ear canal, or middle ear

Sensorineural hearing loss occurs when the bones, eardrum and membranes are intact but the inner ear (cochlea) deteriorates as the result of causes that can include the aging process or degeneration of nerves (retrocochlear) leading from the inner ear to the brain.

Examples of conditions that may cause a sensorineural hearing loss include:

- The natural aging process
- Diseases
- Birth injury
- Drugs that are toxic to the auditory system
- Genetic syndromes
- Noise exposure
- Viruses
- Head Trauma
- Tumors

Mixed hearing loss is when there are elements from both conductive and sensorineural hearing loss. This occurs when there is damage or disturbance to the outer or middle ear and damage to the inner ear.