



Visiting Someone with Hearing Loss

Communicating with an older adult who has some hearing loss may be frustrating for both you and your loved one. There are different types of hearing loss. The elderly often have difficulty hearing a sound clearly, knowing where it came from and distinguishing it from background noise. Generally it is best to speak in a lower tone and at a slower pace. Here are some other suggestions to help make communication easier.

- Get the person's attention before you speak. A tap on the shoulder or a wave of the hand can do the trick.
- Speak to the person face to face, avoid talking to the person from another room.
- Do not cover your mouth or put anything in your mouth while you are speaking.
- Maintain eye contact during the conversation.
- If your loved one has better hearing in one ear, position yourself on that side. Remember that someone may be less able to hear well when they are tired or ill.
- Avoid standing in front of a bright light, such as a bright window. The light and the shadows that are created across your face make it very difficult to lip read.
- Be aware of the amount of noise that is in the area. Televisions, radios, traffic and other noises can make it hard for your loved one to hear you. Find a quiet, comfortable, well-lighted area for your visit.
- Use facial expressions, gestures and tone of voice to help convey what you are saying.
- Do not shout. Raising the volume of your voice also raises the pitch of your voice and higher pitches are usually more difficult to hear. Instead, lower the pitch of your voice and speak clearly.
- If your loved one still does not understand what you are saying, try to say the same thing using different words.