Over 466 million people live with disabling hearing loss. It is predicted that **by 2050 nearly one in ten people will have hearing loss.**

Hearing loss can be prevented and its impact reduced.

**When should you suspect hearing loss?**

Your **child** may have hearing loss if he or she:

- doesn't respond to sounds
- cannot understand what you say properly
- has delayed or improper speech development
- has discharge from the ear
- suffers repeated episodes of pain in or blockage of the ear

As **an adult**, you may have a hearing loss if:

- you often ask people to repeat themselves
- you tend to raise the volume of the radio or television
- you regularly miss parts of conversations
- you have a ringing sensation in the ear (tinnitus)
- people tell you that you speak loudly

**HEARING LOSS: How to prevent it and to reduce its impact**

...and **prepare for it.**

**WHO/NMH/NVI/18.7**
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For more details refer to:
www.who.int/deafness/world-hearing-day/whd-2018/en
What is hearing loss?
A person who is not able to hear as well as someone with normal hearing is said to have hearing loss. It can vary in severity. A person with **mild hearing loss** may find it difficult to understand conversations in noisy places such as a restaurant. Someone with **moderate hearing loss** has difficulty understanding regular conversations unless voices are raised. Others who have **severe hearing loss** are unable to hear even very loud sounds close to their ears.

What causes hearing loss?

1. **Among newborns:**
   - Family history
   - Infections suffered by the mother during pregnancy
   - Premature birth
   - Lack of oxygen at the time of birth
   - Severe jaundice soon after birth

2. **Among children and adults:**
   - Infections such as meningitis, measles, mumps or ear infections with discharge
   - Use of certain medicines
   - Injury to the head or ear
   - Exposure to loud sounds in any setting
   - Listening through personal audio devices at unsafe levels
   - Wax or foreign bodies blocking the ear canal

3. **Among older people:**
   - Normal ageing process
   - Exposure to loud sounds in any setting
   - High blood pressure
   - Diabetes
   - Use of certain medicines

What can you do to avoid hearing loss?

**As an individual:**
- Do not insert any object into the ear
- Use earplugs and earmuffs in noisy places
- In case of any ear problems, consult a doctor immediately
- Check if medicines you take can affect your hearing
- Have your hearing tested regularly
- If advised to do so, use a hearing device as indicated

**As a child carer:**
- Do not insert anything into a child’s ear for any reason including to clean it
- Teach children never to insert anything into their ears
- Take your child to see a doctor in case the child complains of pain or blockage or has discharge coming from the ear
- Do not allow children to swim in dirty water
- Do not hit or slap a child
- Protect children’s ears from loud sounds
- Teach children to listen safely through personal audio devices

**As a community worker:**
- Learn about hearing loss and share information on ear and hearing care
- Know where ear care services are provided and guide people on how to access them
- Refer to a doctor people reporting with ear pain or discharge
- Learn about hearing devices and help people to use them properly
- Encourage deaf people to use sign language and organize support groups

**As a teacher:**
- If a child is inattentive in class, it could indicate hearing loss; consider suggesting a hearing test
- Educate children on ear care and on the risks of inserting objects in the ear and of listening to loud sounds, including music
- Respect children: hitting a child or slapping him might result in hearing loss
- Refer the child to a doctor immediately in case of discharge or pain in the ear

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