



# *Why Your Child's Hearing* CHANGES FROM DAY TO DAY

Some people call it selective hearing, whilst others feel as though some days their children just don't listen as well as they did the day before. When a child has a cold, congestion, or any infection, this can affect their ears and throat. These symptoms often cause a conductive hearing loss. A conductive hearing loss is when sound cannot get from the outer ear to the middle ear easily due to an often-temporary blockage or obstruction. This can make it hard to hear soft sounds or loud sounds can be muffled.

Conductive hearing losses can be caused by middle ear infections that cause fluid build-up behind the eardrum. This is referred to as Glue Ear as the fluid is thick like glue. While a child may not seem as though they are sick or in pain during this time, their hearing will fluctuate. This means sometimes they are hearing well, and other times they have a temporary hearing loss. It is important to have your child's hearing tested if you feel as though their hearing is fluctuating. You may be instructed to see your GP or ENT specialist for your child's fluctuating hearing.

It is imperative to have your child's hearing tested if they have had a recent cold or respiratory infection, or their hearing has not returned to normal. If you are concerned about your child's hearing, contact Advanced Hearing Solutions to arrange a hearing test. Ongoing hearing problems like ear infections can have long term consequences for children if they are not managed well.

# How to prevent fluctuating hearing

## **Feed your child food that requires chewing.**

Chewing helps to develop the muscles around the back of the nose and mouth. Additionally, nutritious foods will help to develop your child's immune system. These foods can include fruit, raw vegetables, whole grain foods, or even sugarless chewing gum.

## **Do not smoke near your children.**

Passive smoking can increase the chances of having respiratory problems and middle ear issues including glue ear. Remember to not allow smoking in or near your home or in your car.

## **Wash your hands.**

Encourage your children to wash their hands with soap and clean, running water to help prevent the spread of germs. This is especially important when touching food, using the bathroom or after coughing, sneezing, and blowing your nose.

## **Blow their nose.**

Urge your child not to sniff when they have a runny nose but instead blow their nose. Blowing their nose helps to keep their ears healthy as it prevents fluid build-up in the ears, nose, and throat.

## **Let your kids play.**

Active play that involves jumping, running, rolling, and skipping will help your child to breathe deep and cough to clear their airways. Also, giving them a balloon each day to blow up is a fun exercise for your child and their airways.

# How to help your child when their hearing is fluctuating

If your child is experiencing an ear infection, their hearing may be impacted. When a conductive hearing loss is present, it can feel as though you are listening underwater. There are a few things you can do to help your child communicate during this time.

- Get their attention first – wave, gently tap them on the shoulder or say their name. Make it clear to your child that you would like to talk to them. This will reduce the amount of information they will mishear if you begin talking suddenly.
- Get down on their level – talk to your child in your normal tone. Using your facial cues will assist your child in understanding what you are saying.
- Check what they have heard – allow your child time to think about what you have said and then confirm they have heard you by asking them to repeat it back to you. This allows you time to clarify if anything has been misunderstood.
- Reduce background noise – it is more difficult to hear when there is a lot of noise surrounding you from sources such as the TV remember to turn these devices off when you are having a talking with your child.
- Avoid labels – never label your child as being lazy, naughty, ignorant or selectively deaf as this is beyond their control.
- Seek medical advice – If your child is complaining of ear pain, or shows any other signs of an infection such as pulling at their ears, please see your doctor for advice.