

## Falls prevention and your hearing

**Very often changes in hearing can be experienced as we get older.**

Changes in hearing can be caused by:

- ear infections
- side-effects of certain medications (particularly aspirin in high doses and certain antibiotics)
- exposure to loud noise
- head injury
- diseases such as mumps or meningitis
- wax build up

These changes may affect the balance centre in your inner ear, thus increasing your risk of falls.

For further information on resources

If you believe you are experiencing hearing problems make sure you do the following:

- Tell your concerns to your GP. There may be a simple explanation, such as wax build up or an infection that can be treated by medication. Otherwise, your GP may refer you to an audiology clinic or specialist ear department.
- Hearing aids are available for free on the NHS, but only as advised by audiologists. They can also be bought privately. The aids make sounds louder and may partially remove background noise.
- Action on Hearing Loss provide lots of useful advice on ear health and hearing loss <https://actiononhearingloss.org.uk/>
- There is other equipment available that can assist you at home – for instance vibrating pads or flashing lights to alert you when the doorbell rings. This may be loaned by your local social services or the RNID can advise you where you can purchase it yourself.
- Find local lip reading classes – learning a new skill is always good for us!