**What is Hidden Hearing Loss?**

Hidden hearing loss a relatively new term. It describes hearing loss that cannot be measured by standard hearing tests, even though patients report difficulty hearing, especially in background noise.

**How is hidden hearing loss measured?**

There is no standard test protocol to detect hidden hearing loss. A person with hidden hearing loss may have normal results on a standard hearing test battery. An audiologist may elect to do additional testing that evaluates a patient’s hearing abilities in the presence of background noise to better understand the patient’s difficulty.

**The cause of Hidden Hearing loss**

There is still plenty of research to be done in this area, but initial research suggests that hidden hearing loss is caused by damage to cells in the hearing organ (cochlea) in the inner ear. These cells connect the hearing organ to the brain. Once damaged, these cells are no longer able to send information to the brain. This can cause the brain to not receive a clear sound signal and to not interpret the sound correctly.

**What to do if you think you have hidden hearing loss.**

If you suspect that you may have a hearing loss, then you should schedule an appointment with an audiologist for further evaluation.If hidden hearing loss is

suspected, communication strategies and assistive listening devices may be used to help in difficult listening situations.

**Protecting your hearing is the most important step in preventing hidden hearing loss. What steps can you take to prevent hidden hearing loss?**

• Wear proper hearing protection (earmuffs, earplugs) when in noisy environments such as: concerts, sporting events, fireworks displays, and car races. Hearing protection comes in a variety of sizes and textures to provide optimal fit. Custom-made earplugs can be obtained from an audiologist.

• Set volume limits on your portable devices.

• Walk away from loud sounds.

**The role of an audiologist**

Audiologists identify, diagnose, and manage hearing loss and work closely with physicians, when necessary, as an important part of the management team.

Do you think you or a family member may have hearing loss? Click on the Find an Audiologist link at [www.audiology.org](http://www.audiology.org) to locate and set up an appointment with an Audiologist in your area

**References**

Otman, H. (2017, Feb 28) Second Cause of *Hidden Hearing Loss Identified- Hearing Research By Michigan Medicine.* Retrieved from https://medicine.umich.edu/dept/khri/news/archive/201702/second-cause-hearing-loss-identified