



Tips for Communicating with People who have Hearing Loss

Successful communication requires the efforts of all people involved in a conversation.

Even when the person with hearing loss utilizes hearing aids and active listens, it is important that others involved with the communication process consistently use good communication strategies.

- **Face the patient directly**, on the same level and in good light. **Never** turn your back to the patient. Don't look at the chart or the prescription you are writing. Look at the patient.
- Avoid covering your mouth with your hands or paper.
- **Speak clearly, slowly, distinctly, but naturally, without shouting or exaggerating mouth movements.** Shouting distorts the sound of speech and may make speech reading more difficult.
- **Say the person's name or get his/her attention before talking.** This gives the listener a chance to focus attention and reduces the chance of missing words at the beginning of the conversation.
- **Slow down...**avoid talking too rapidly or using sentences that are too complex. Pause between sentences and phrases, and make sure you have been understood before going on.
- **Position yourself properly;** ask if they hear better out of one ear or the other
- **Reduce environmental noise**
- **Never speak directly to their ear,** this distorts sound and hides visual cues
- **Rephrase instead of repeating**
- **Give more time to respond,** as processing takes longer
- Have the patient **repeat information back to you** to confirm that they understood your message
- **Provide pertinent information in writing,** such as appointment times, etc.
- Recognize that everyone, especially the hard of hearing, has a harder time hearing and understanding when ill or tired
- Recognize that all of these strategies and hearing aids may still not be enough. Some people will have difficulty understanding speech no matter what...**BE PATIENT**