



SEPTEMBER IS THE NATIONAL MONTH OF
DEAF PEOPLE

This annual week aims to educate the public about hearing loss, deafness, deaf culture and sign language so that hearing people understand deafness and the culture of the deaf community.

Disabling hearing loss affects more than **4 million** South Africans.

HEARING LOSS CAN BE CAUSED BY SEVERAL FACTORS, INCLUDING:



AGE: There is a progressive loss of ability to hear high frequencies with increasing age.



NOISE: Noise is responsible for 50% of all cases of hearing loss.



GENETIC: Hearing loss can be inherited.



ILLNESS: Several illnesses can cause auditory nerve or cochlear damage, including measles, meningitis, autoimmune diseases, mumps, foetal alcohol syndrome, premature birth and syphilis.



NEUROLOGICAL DISORDERS: This includes multiple sclerosis and strokes.



MEDICATIONS: Some medications cause irreversible damage to the ear and are limited in their use for this reason.



PHYSICAL TRAUMA: People who sustain head injuries are especially vulnerable to hearing loss or tinnitus, which can be temporary or permanent.



UNTREATED HEARING LOSS INCREASES HEALTHCARE UTILISATION:

- 17% increased risk of emergency department visit
- 44% increased risk of 30-day readmission
- 2.5 days longer hospital stays
- 47% increased rate of hospitalisation

HEARING LOSS IS ALSO ASSOCIATED WITH SEVERAL RISKS:

- Social isolation
- Depression
- Unemployment
- 3-Fold increased risk of dementia

TIPS FOR SPEAKING TO SOMEONE WHO IS DEAF

There are several things you can do to improve communication with deaf people:

- Don't say it doesn't matter
- Speak one person at a time
- Don't speak too slowly or too quickly
- Smile and relax
- Keep your mouth visible
- Speak clearly without shouting
- Face towards the person while you're speaking
- Repeat yourself if you need to

SCHEME BENEFITS

- Audiology, genetic counselling and hearing aid acoustics are payable from your day-to-day benefit limit.
- Infant hearing screening by an audiologist is covered for all infant beneficiaries up to 8 weeks.
- Hearing aids and repairs, including testing, fitting and after-care from our preferred provider, hearConnect, as follows:
 - **COMPREHENSIVE** **COMPREHENSIVE SELECT**
Up to R25 000 per family every 24 months.
 - **VALUE** R19 600 per family every 24 months.



NEED HELP? Contact your Scheme for any benefit-related queries you may have.

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