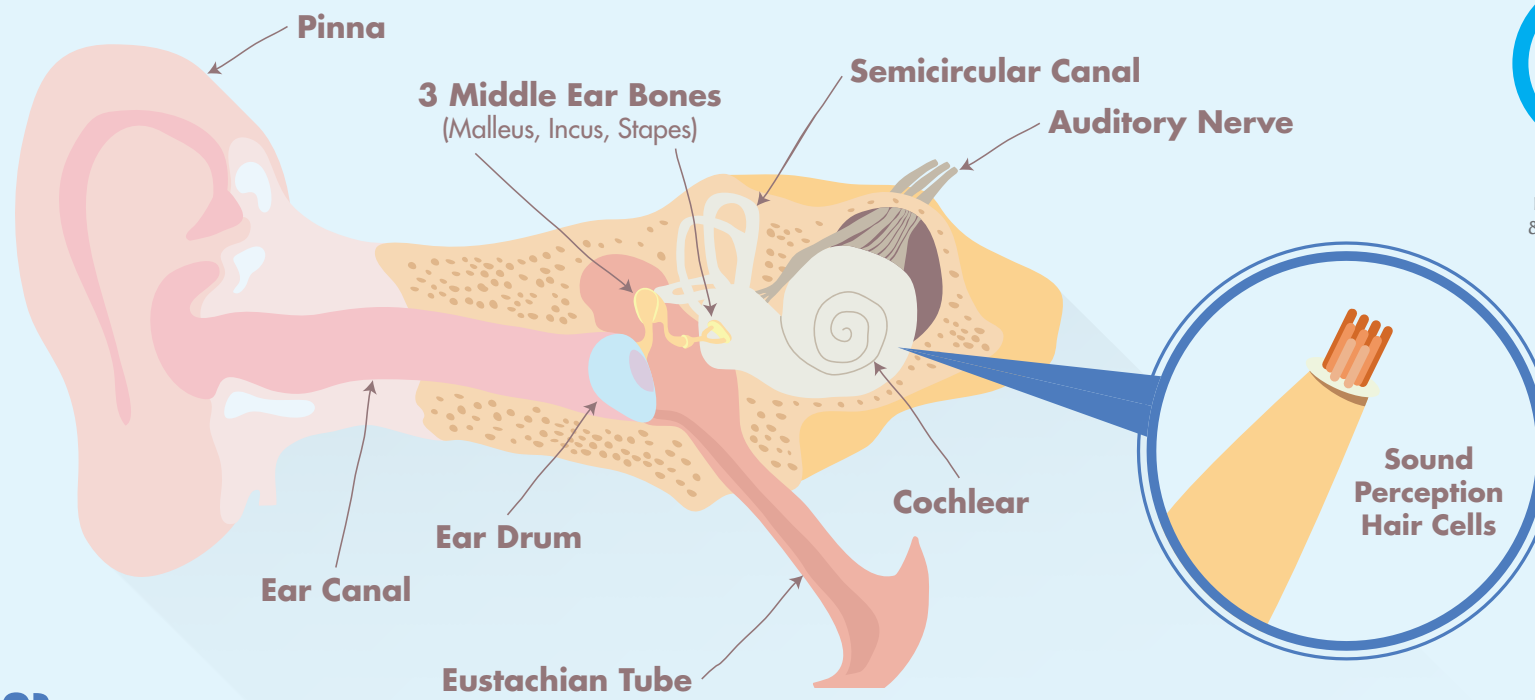




LynneLim
Ear Nose Throat
& Hearing Centre
(Child & Adult)

AGE-RELATED HEARING LOSS (PRESBYACUSIS)



Age-related hearing loss, known as presbycusis, occurs slowly as tiny sound-perception hair cells in the inner ear and hearing nerve deteriorate or get damaged. The hearing loss is usually greater for high-pitched sounds at the start.

Sounds are not only softer, but words are also distorted and jumbled. There is reduction in speech discrimination and difficulty understanding speech. Example, "I think she should go to the store" is heard wrongly as "I wish we could go to the show". This is worse in background noise or poor acoustics environments.

Words rich in high pitch sounds and sibilant consonants with a whistling quality, like "ch", "f", "g", "s", "sh", "t", "th", "z" are most affected. As hearing loss

progresses, explosive consonants like "b", "d", "k", "p" also get distorted.

The doctor should first exclude any treatable or dangerous hearing conditions. Initially on fitting hearing aids, there may be sensitivity to background noise that others with normal hearing are accustomed to. Time is needed over weeks and months for the brain to adjust.

Very careful choice of different types and brands of hearing aids and proper fine-tuning of the hearing aids is important. Hearing outcomes also depend on the duration of hearing loss, brain sound processing ability, type and cause of the hearing loss.

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