

## TIPS FOR HEARING LOSS

1/05

*The INFO SERIES has been developed to provide you with general information. The descriptions do not describe the full extent of information available. Please contact one of our Independent Living Specialists for more information.*

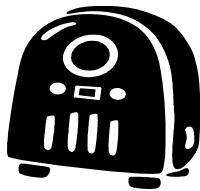
**Approximately 28 million Americans, or about one in every ten people in this country, have a hearing loss.** Projections indicate that this number and percentage will grow as Baby Boomers age and increasing noise pollution continues to take its toll.



People who have trouble hearing may have difficulty hearing routine alerts: doorbells, telephones, alarm clocks and timers that signal "wake up" or "check the roast." They could have trouble hearing warnings from smoke and fire alarms. Loss of hearing can cause difficulty understanding face-to-face conversations, or voices on the telephone and on media such as the television and the radio.

### NON-TECH IDEAS

- **Tell people about your hearing loss.** Ask them to face you when they talk so that you can see their faces.
- **Ask people to speak louder, but not shout.** Tell them what will help; should they talk slower, use different words, enunciate and not mumble, or rephrase instead of repeat.
- **Turn off noises** around you like the TV, radio, and dishwasher when trying to communicate with others.
- **Be aware of noise around** you that can make hearing more difficult. When you go to a restaurant, do not sit near the kitchen or near a band playing music. Background noise makes it hard to hear people talk.



- **Decrease background noise.** Install insulating materials around noisy appliances like dishwashers and washing machines.
- **Install insulating materials on floors** (e.g., soundproof sub flooring, cover with carpeting) or try to improve the home's acoustics to reduce the transfer of sound between levels of the home.
- **Install a window** beside the front door or in the front door so visitors are visible from inside.

## LOW TECHNOLOGY

---

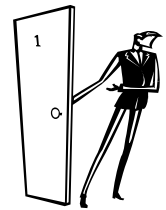
- Use an **assistive listening** device for one-on-one conversations or group settings such as church and movie theatres.
- **Amplified telephones** may provide the extra boost and clarity you need for comfortable phone conversations. You can purchase amplified ringers, visual alerts and portable and in-line amplifiers for phone use and extra loud answering machines. Cell phone amplifiers are also available. A wide variety of amplified telephones and headsets, voice carry over and combination TTY/phones are available. Each phone has unique features to meet the needs of people with mild, moderate or severe hearing loss.
- **Doorbell - - Loud ringers, flashing strobe lights or** closed circuit television systems can be used to see who is at the door.
- **Closed caption television - -** Closed caption televisions have the words printed at the bottom of the screen. This feature is usually activated through a button on the remote control.



## HIGH TECHNOLOGY

---

- **Install a strobe smoke alarm** to alert you to the presence of a fire. (The pulsing effect of the strobe distinguishes it from a simple flashing light and helps to communicate the notion of alarm.)
- **Alert Systems** change audio alerts to another sensor. For example, use lights for visual signal or vibrating for a tactile signal.
- **Tactile signal equipment** is available for alarm clocks, pagers, doorbells, stove timers, baby monitors, and telephones.
- **Install a TDD** (telecommunications device for the deaf), which enables a person who is deaf to communicate over the telephone. There are also compact and portable TDD/TTY's for travel and systems that work with cell phones.
- **Install a video phone.** With high speed Internet and a computer, you can talk directly to the person you are calling (if they also have a video phone system). One to try is [www.sorensonvrs.com](http://www.sorensonvrs.com)
- **Relay System - -** Call through relay and talk to anyone (with or without a TTY) by using an operator to "relay" your message. For more information on the Wisconsin Relay Service through Hamilton Relay, call 711.
- **Install a television hook-up to the telephone's caller ID read-out** to indicate an incoming call.



## TECHNOLOGY CLOSET

Society's Assets operates a "technology closet" that currently has about 500 items. Equipment can be tried out before making a purchase. Over the years assistive technology has played an increasingly critical role in assisting individuals to live independently in their homes. Contact an Independent Living Coordinator at Society's Assets to see if we have the item you are looking for.



## RESOURCES

- **Stores** - - Many of the items recommended are available at stores in the area.
- **Catalogues** - - Check with Society's Assets. Catalogues on assistive technology are available in the resource library.
- **Used equipment** may be available. Keep in mind that some equipment is very specialized to an individual's needs. Contact the Independent Living Coordinator for a list of resources. There are some local organizations that offer equipment recycling, as well as, state organizations and Internet sites. For mobility equipment there is a Wisconsin Wheelchair Recycling project.
- **Info Sheets** - - Society's Assets has Info Sheets that list resources of where to order items. There are Info Sheets for telephones, clothing, driving, hard of hearing equipment, visual aid equipment, and physical limitations.
- Check **web sites**. If you don't have a computer, the libraries have computers you can use.



## FUNDING

There are many funding sources. Each source has its own regulations, limits and eligibility requirements, and each situation is different. Don't overlook the possibilities of combining funding sources to reach your goal. Here are some options to check out.

- Medicaid
- Medicaid Waivers
- Medicare
- Private Insurance
- Veteran's Benefits
- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Workers Compensation
- Family Support Program
- Disability Organizations
- Private Grants
- WisLoan
- County Funded Programs

*The listings on this Info Sheet should in no way be construed to constitute an endorsement of an agency or organization or its service, nor should exclusion be construed to constitute disapproval. The information that appears in this publication was obtained from the agencies/organizations listed above.*



**Racine Office**  
 5200 Washington Ave. #225  
 Racine, WI 53406  
 (262) 637-9128 V/TTY  
 (800) 378-9128 V/TTY

**Kenosha Office**  
 5727 6<sup>th</sup> Ave  
 Kenosha, WI 53140  
 (262) 657-3999 V/TTY  
 (800) 317-3999 V/TTY

**Elkhorn Office**  
 615 E. Geneva Street  
 Elkhorn, WI 53121  
 (262) 723-8181 V/TTY  
 (800) 261-8181 V/TTY

**Alternative Format Available Upon Request**