

Devices for People with Hearing Impairment

Even when hearing aids are used successfully, it is common for people with a hearing loss to experience difficulties with the telephone, television or hearing alarm bells, e.g. telephone bell, doorbell, alarm clock. There are a number of devices (Assistive Listening Devices) available that can be used with or without hearing aids, to help in these situations. These devices may also be used by people who have a hearing loss, but are too ill or frail to manage a hearing aid.

Telephone Devices

There are public telephones with volume controls in several parts of Melbourne and also some payphone telephone typewriters (see below). Contact Telstra Payphone Services for locations of these.

Telstra Standard Rental Phone – T1000S

This standard telephone from Telstra has an adjustable ring volume for making the alarm bell louder and volume control for amplifying the loudness of the incoming voice signal. It has an in-built hearing aid coupler that can be used with the "T" switch of a hearing aid.

If you are a Telstra client, you can upgrade to this phone with a standard monthly rental fee. Telstra also have a Big Button/Multi purpose phone which has visual alert, incoming voice volume adjustment and large buttons.

Oricom TP100

Oricom also supply a model phone called TP100 which has a volume, tone control and also a visual alert. This phone is hearing aid compatible and offers excellent incoming voice clarity.

Alternative Telephone Alarms

The Telstra General Purpose Alarm has variable volume, tone and pitch controls. It can be placed anywhere around the home or workplace. Telstra supplies special equipment such as General Purpose Alarm and Visual Signal Alert at no extra cost over that of a standard service to hearing impaired users on presentation of an application form signed by an audiologist, doctor, or appropriate health professional. The Visual Signal Alert and similar devices can convert the sound of the telephone bell into a flashing light.

Telstra can supply equipment to help the Deaf and hearing impaired through the **Telstra Disability Equipment Program**. This program is only available to Telstra clients.

Contact Telstra to request a brochure with an application form by:

Phone: 1800 068 424 (voice)

Fax: 1800 814 777

TTY: 1800 808 981

or by visiting www.telstra.com.au

Portable Acoustic Amplifiers for the Telephone

These are available for people with a mild to moderate hearing loss, who don't use a hearing aid. A range of portable telephone amplifiers are available for those with a more severe hearing loss who use a hearing aid.

Digital Mobile Phones

Special mobile phone attachments have been developed to assist people with hearing aids that also have a Telecoil setting.

The T/link is a device that sits over the ear and transmits a magnetic field, which is detected by the hearing aid Telecoil. The hearing aid then converts this to sound. T/links are available for most mobile phones. Most require a suitable adaptor to connect into.

Neck loops are also available on some mobile phones.

If you require more information about the Telecoil feature on your hearing aid, you may need to discuss this further with your Audiologist.

Music links plug into CD players/iPods and any other audio output device that has a 3.5mm output jack. Blue Tooth technology is also now available for people to communicate with mobile phones using wireless transmission.

Devices to Convert the Telephone Signal into a Visual Form

Devices are available for people with a severe hearing loss which send and receive a written message through the telephone system. The incoming and outgoing message is presented on a small visual display screen.

They are known as Telephone Typewriters or TTYs. There are a number of models available and some models also provide a printed copy of incoming and outgoing messages. A TTY message can only be received by another TTY. A directory of TTY phone numbers is available from Telstra. Eligible individuals are able to rent TTYs from Telstra for a small fee. TTYs can also be rented through the **Telstra Disability Equipment Program**.

The Commonwealth Government funds a **National Relay Service** which relays phone calls between Deaf people, those with a hearing impairment and/or speech impairment and the wider community.

Contact the National Relay Service:

Phone: 1800 555 660 (voice)

TTY: 1800 555 630

Fax: 1800 555 690

Television Devices

These devices help overcome problems that occur when a family or other group of people want to hear the TV at different volume levels. Some devices can be used without a hearing aid and some devices are used together with a hearing aid.

TV Devices used without a Hearing Aid

Headphones or Earphones with a Volume Control

These headphones plug directly into the earphone socket of the TV. Although this may eliminate sound from the main speakers, many TV sets now have a switch or socket, enabling the main speaker to continue to operate.

Cordless Infra-Red Devices

These devices consist of an infra-red transmitter which is attached to the TV, VCR or radio. A small infra-red receiver is worn, in the form of headphones. Various infra-red devices can be purchased that can transmit sound directly into your ears or via a small loop which interacts with your hearing aid/s.

Captions for TV Programs

Captions can be accessed by a Teletext TV or TV with a Set Top Box device added. Contact Media Access Australia:

Phone: (02) 9212 6242 (voice or TTY)

Fax: (02) 9212 6289

Email: info@mediaaccess.org.au

or visit www.mediaaccess.org.au

They can also supply an informative free booklet.

TV Devices used with a Hearing Aid

Induction Loops

These attach to the TV or radio and transmit a signal that can be received by hearing aids with a "T" switch. The induction loop may be placed in a variety of places.

It can be set up as a room loop under the carpet or around your favourite "TV chair".

Alarm Clocks

The alternatives to a normal alarm clock bell include:

- a clock with a louder bell
- an alarm clock that triggers a flashing light
- an alarm clock that triggers a vibrator pad
- an alarm clock that triggers a flashing light and a vibrator pad
- an alarm clock that vibrates
- an alarm with tone (pitch) control

Door Alarms

The type of door alarm most suitable for you depends on the type and degree of hearing loss that you have. Doorbells with low pitched buzzers, amplified bells, musical chimes and warblers, or even an old fashioned doorknocker, are all potential solutions. There are also devices available that cause lights to flash when the doorbell is rung. A remote control doorbell that enables you to plug the doorbell into a power socket in which ever room you are, is also available. In addition, wireless alerting systems are available.

Smoke Detectors

Wireless smoke alarms that transmit to a variety of receivers, such as flashing light, adjustable volume receivers and vibrating pads are also available. Ionization and Photoelectric alarms.

Baby Cry Alarms

These devices pick up the sound of a baby crying and convert it to a flashing light or vibrating alarm signal. They can be placed wherever most convenient to be seen or felt.

Complete Wireless Alerting Systems

The Bellman Visit system is a wireless system, requiring no installation that can link some or all of these alarms together. The system consists of different transmitter units sending the sound signals to the different receiver units alerting for the calls and alarms. It can alert you of the doorbell, telephone ring, smoke alarm or baby's cry via a receiver that increases the volume of the sound or a vibrating pager which alerts with different vibrations. A clock and a flashing strobe are also available.

A full catalogue of the Assistive Listening Devices is available for download on www.hearservice.com.au. A range of Assistive Listening Devices are also on display at all **hearservice** clinics. To contact your nearest clinic call 1300 30 20 31 to make an appointment for a consultation with our Devices Specialist.

Victorian Deaf Society

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Related Information Sheets

- Conversing by TTY

Vicdeaf regularly updates our fact sheets. To ensure that your information is current, or for further information about Vicdeaf and the services offered, please visit our website or contact us.

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