

## We Are Here to Help

Our goal is to offer support throughout your treatment. We hope to perform a baseline test **prior** to the first treatment and then to monitor hearing during therapy. However, services are available to you at any time during and after treatment.

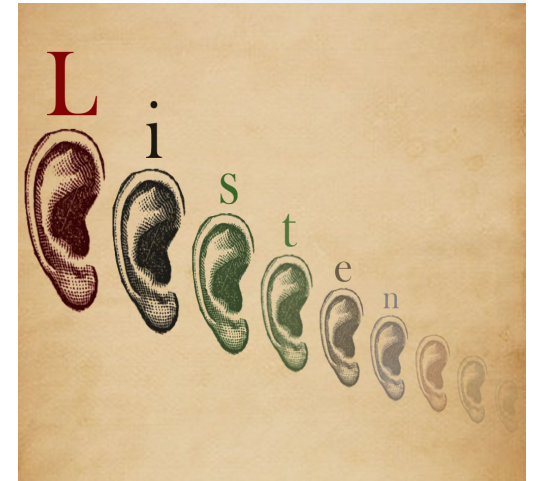
At your first appointment, you will be assigned an audiology case manager. This will be your primary contact person throughout your treatment and afterwards. We realize that some patients may not feel up to adjusting to new hearing aids while going through treatment. However connecting with an audiologist will position you to receive amplification as soon as you are ready.

We are available to provide hearing healthcare during your treatment and allow you to access the services you want at any time.

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## Your Hearing During Chemotherapy or Antibiotic Treatment



**Audiology  
Department  
Augusta VA**

Some chemotherapy drugs and antibiotics are known to be potentially damaging to hearing. These drugs are called *ototoxic*. The audiology department can provide a number of services to patients receiving ototoxic drugs.

### **Monitoring of Hearing Level**

A *baseline* test will determine your hearing level prior to treatment. Many people have mild undiagnosed hearing loss so having a baseline is important. Repeated hearing tests will detect any changes whether fluctuating or permanent as a result of the medication.

### **Hearing Aid Fitting**

If hearing changes or declines to the point that communication is affected, hearing aids may be an option. The VA provides all the latest digital hearing aid technology. Some aids have Bluetooth capability and can link to cell phones or other devices.

### **Assistive Technology**

In some cases, hearing aids may not be indicated. If problems are localized to a specific communication situation, it may be best to address just that issue. The following assistive devices are available:

- Amplified or captioned telephones
- TV devices
- Streaming devices which can be used with electronics that have an earphone plug: computers, iPads, tablets, Kindles, iPods. These devices will enable access to music, movies, audiobooks and other media
- Alerting devices such as flashing or vibrating alarm clocks, doorbell signalers, and telephone signalers

### **Tinnitus Relief**

*Tinnitus* is the technical name for any kind of noise in the ears. It can manifest as a variety of sounds: ringing, buzzing, hissing, chirping. Tinnitus is a very common side effect of ototoxic medications. There is no way to stop the tinnitus, but there are options to give relief from it. Since tinnitus is a sound, other sounds can be used to combat it. Relaxation and breathing techniques can also be of help.

The following options are available for tinnitus relief:

- Sound generators that will produce various soothing sounds. Pillow speakers are available if the tinnitus is disruptive to sleep
- Tinnitus apps can be streamed from a smart phone (iPhone or Android) or a tablet. The audiologist can recommend the most effective apps and provide a wireless Bluetooth speaker
- Training in relaxation therapy techniques. This is provided by the Recreation Therapist
- Counseling and cognitive behavioral therapy provided by Mental Health Services

### **Advocacy**

If a hearing loss develops during treatment, this may impact ability to communicate on the job or in a classroom setting. Individuals with disabilities are entitled to reasonable accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act. The audiologist can assist with requests for accommodations.