

Three Categories of Hearing Loss

Hearing loss is most commonly categorized in one of three ways:

1. **Conductive hearing loss** involves the outer ear, the middle ear, or both. It usually results from a blockage from earwax, fluid in the middle ear, or a punctured eardrum. Conductive hearing loss can often be corrected surgically.
2. **Sensorineural – or “nerve” – hearing loss** involves damage to the inner ear. It can be caused by disease, illness, age, injury from exposure to noise or certain medicines, or a genetic disorder. Usually, sensorineural hearing loss can't be repaired surgically, but it can be corrected with a hearing aid.

3. **Mixed hearing loss** is a combination of sensorineural and conductive hearing loss. Only a small portion of adult hearing problems, like ear infections and middle ear diseases, are medically or surgically treatable. If the hearing loss can't be treated medically or surgically, a hearing aid may be beneficial.

Source:

Federal Trade Commission (2010). Sound advice for hearing aids [online]. Retrieved October 15, 2010. From <http://ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/consumer/health/hea10.shtm>.

