

Unilateral Hearing Loss (UHL)

SNIPPETS

Simple and Informative
Parent to Parent
Education Tools



[Resource Guide
\(handsandvoices.org\)](https://handsandvoices.org)



[Supporting Success For Children
With Unilateral Hearing Loss
\(successforkidswithhearingloss.com\)](https://successforkidswithhearingloss.com)



[Tips for Parents
\(handsandvoices.org\)](https://handsandvoices.org)



[Research Findings
\(hearingreview.com/hearing-
products/hearing-
aids/speech-noise/unilateral-
hearing-loss-in-children-
current-perspectives\)](https://hearingreview.com/hearing-products/hearing-aids/speech-noise/unilateral-hearing-loss-in-children-current-perspectives)

Unilateral hearing loss (UHL) means that the child has hearing loss in only one ear.

- Currently the prevalence or occurrence of UHL at birth is about 1 per 1000 babies. This number climbs to 3 to 6 children per 1000 by school age, because screening at birth often will not detect minimal or mild loss (it is not designed to) or because the hearing loss progresses over time.
- The biggest cause (31-50% of cases) of UHL is idiopathic which means that the cause is unknown. Other causes can be ear malformations or disease processes such as Cytomegalovirus (sy·toe·MEG·a·low·vy·rus), or CMV.
- UHL can range from mild hearing loss all the way to profound hearing loss (also called single-sided deafness or SSD).
- Hearing can deteriorate over time depending on the cause of the loss. About 7-11% of UHL will progress to hearing loss in both ears.
- Children with unilateral loss will have difficulties localizing or telling where sound is coming from, which may affect their safety as well as figuring out who is speaking in a group.
- Children with UHL will also have great difficulty understanding speech in the presence of background noise.
- Children with UHL experience listening fatigue, which could affect their ability to concentrate and learn throughout the day.
- In the past, it was thought that kids with UHL had a “good” ear so they would do fine. However, research has shown that this is not the case and that interventions, or at the very least monitoring, are beneficial.
- Depending on the type and cause of the hearing loss, children with UHL may benefit from fitting a hearing aid, fitting a bone anchored hearing device or cochlear implantation.
- When the child reaches school age, they will also benefit from using remote microphone technology to help in larger and more noisy rooms.
- All babies with UHL should be enrolled in early intervention and receive therapy to help reduce negative impacts from the hearing loss.