

## Helpful Information and Questions to Ask Before and During Your Healthcare Facility Visit

Use your pre-admission visit to discuss with medical personnel any special needs you might have for your visit. Inform your doctor, surgeon, and especially your anesthesiologist about your hearing loss. Discuss use of communication equipment such as a Pocket Talker or personal FM system.

Explain that you might not be able to hear healthcare staff speaking through a surgical mask or understand public addresses or intercom announcements.

### **Inquire:**

- about medications you will receive; some are ototoxic and might affect your hearing.
- about policy regarding removal of your hearing aids or external cochlear implant device and if you can keep them on during the procedure.

### **Request:**

- that a note be prominently displayed on your medical records requesting spoken communication be made face-to-face, without a surgical mask, and the need to be brief, clear and to the point.
- that the universal identification symbol be posted to alert staff of your hearing loss.
- that your hearing aid(s) or cochlear implant is secured properly if the devices need to be removed during your procedure.
- that a friend or relative who understands your hearing loss be with you in the recovery room, if permissible.

## Your Rights as a Patient with Hearing Loss Are the Same as Those of Any Other Patient

- Full participation in your healthcare
- Courteous treatment from staff
- A reasonable response to your requests
- Conscientious effort by staff to communicate your medical status and options respecting patient privacy and confidentiality
- Help in finding alternative ways of receiving follow-up care if you are unable to use the telephone
- Clarification of all medical documents before you sign, including informed consent, healthcare proxy and do not resuscitate (DNR)
- Reasonable accommodation of your hearing loss, with assistive devices provided at no charge
- Help in providing information on obtaining financial assistance
- Obtaining a second opinion about your medical treatment
- Contacting the healthcare patient relations coordinator for problem solving

*The Hearing Loss Association of America is a volunteer international organization that opens the world of communication to people with hearing loss through information, education, support and advocacy.*

## Tips for the patient with hearing loss



## ...when visiting a healthcare facility

 **Hearing Loss  
Association**  
of America  
Rochester Chapter

For additional assistance,  
please call us at: 585.266.7890  
[www.hlaa-rochester-ny.org](http://www.hlaa-rochester-ny.org)

## You and Your Hearing Loss Are Going to a Healthcare Facility



Healthcare issues, while often stressful for many, can be even more disturbing to a person with hearing loss whose anxieties are compounded by the fear of not understanding or hearing questions, instructions, and announcements. These concerns are very real.

If you have difficulty communicating with healthcare staff members, it may cause misunderstandings that might affect your treatment and lead to undesirable consequences.

Therefore, as a patient with hearing loss, it is essential that you make every effort to establish good communication with members of the healthcare staff.

## Understanding Your Responsibilities as a Patient with Hearing Loss

It is not enough to tell people “I have a hearing loss”; you need to educate them. Tell them how to communicate with you by giving them specific strategies such as: “Please get my attention before speaking,” and “Please face me when you speak.”

It is your responsibility to remind personnel about your hearing loss and communication strategies that work best for you.

Be patient and polite but persistent. You may need to be assertive and repeat your hearing needs at each visit or with different staff members.

## Four Easy Steps to Use in a Healthcare Setting

**When visiting medical offices, emergency rooms and hospital facilities:**

1. Give the receptionist your name, indicate you have a hearing loss, and that you might not hear your name called.
2. Request a pager if available, or ask that a staff member approach you when requiring your attention.
3. Ask to have “Hearing Loss” noted prominently on all your records.
4. Be sure to express your appreciation for their cooperation.

## Planning and Preparing for a Stay in a Healthcare Facility

### Items to Ask for:

- Telephone with a visible alert and amplification, a TTY, or captioned telephone
- Captioning enabled on the TV
- Hearing loss identification symbol placed on the wall above the head of the bed
- Assistive listening devices (ALD) such as Pocket Talker and FM system if available

### Items to Take With you:

- A small flash light, pen and paper
- Your personal ALD, extra batteries, and a storage container for your hearing aid or cochlear implant
- A supply of *HLAA Communication Tips* to hand out

