

What is auditory processing?

- Auditory processing, also called central auditory processing, refers to how the brain identifies and interprets incoming sounds and then attaches meaning to what is heard. Auditory processing involves how the *brain* understands what the ears hear. You can learn about basic hearing and how the *ears* sense sounds in the handout on **Hearing** in the [Physical Symptoms Section](#).

What is an Auditory Processing Disorder?

- An Auditory Processing Disorder (APD), also called a Central Auditory Processing Disorder (CAPD), is a hearing problem that occurs when the brain is unable to process sounds in a normal way.
- Challenges with auditory processing can be caused by a breakdown in any of the ways speech or sound gets from the ears to the right parts of the brain. This includes:
 - Using both ears together to locate where a sound is coming from
 - Listening to someone or something with noise in the background
 - Processing speech and sounds when the message is unclear (like talking to someone with a mask on)
 - Telling the difference between different sounds or words
- People with APD may have a hard time hearing small sound differences in words. Other signs of an Auditory Processing Disorder can include:
 - Taking longer to answer when being asked a question
 - Difficulty or frustration with understanding what people say in noisy or loud places
 - Inconsistent or inappropriate responses to questions or during conversations
 - Difficulty following or remembering spoken instructions, especially if there are multiple steps
 - Often saying things like “what” or “huh” or asking people to say things again
 - Difficulty understanding what someone is saying even when the information can be heard
 - More challenges listening and understanding when talking on the phone, when the other person is talking fast, or if the other person has an unfamiliar accent

What can I do if I have challenges with Auditory Processing?

- Helpful tips that you can use now to manage challenges with auditory processing include:
 - Ask people to repeat or re-word what they have said as soon as you know you are having trouble understanding
 - Look directly at the speaker’s face when talking
 - Reduce or limit background noise
 - Have important conversations in quieter areas
 - Sit at the front of larger places like classrooms, theatres, or during larger group presentations



What can others do to help?

- Tips and strategies that others can do to help someone who has challenges with auditory processing include:
 - Be sure you have the other's person's attention when you are talking
 - Ask the person if it would help to have information repeated or re-worded if you think what you are saying hasn't been understood
 - Speak slowly and clearly
 - Have conversations somewhere quiet whenever possible
 - Allow enough time for the person to process what you have said and respond to the conversation
 - Try not to give too many instructions or directions at one time
 - When giving instructions follow up with written instructions, like in a text or email, when possible

An Auditory Processing Disorder can only be diagnosed by an Audiologist. An Audiologist is a healthcare professional that specializes in evaluating, identifying, and managing disorders of hearing. You can learn more about how to find an Audiologist at asha.org/profind/

Additional Comments: