

Disorders of the Ear

by Sophia



WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn to identify disorders of the ear and their characteristics. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. Ear Disorders Overview

Different disorders of the ear can have different possible causes; typically, illness or injury are the most common reasons. We're going to take a look at the different types of disorders, characteristics of each of these disorders, and causes of the disorders.

2. Otitis Media

Otitis media is inflammation of the inner ear. The most common cause of this disorder is the spreading of a cold. A cold will spread up to the tubes within the ears that are responsible for helping to clear out bacteria. The spreading of a cold to the tubes within the ears causes blockages and fluid accumulation.

IN CONTEXT

If you've ever heard of somebody having just a common ear infection, generally they're referring to otitis media.



DID YOU KNOW

Children are actually more susceptible because the tubes in their ears are shorter and more horizontal. This makes it easier for fluids to accumulate between the tympanic membrane, or the eardrum, and the inner ear.



TERM TO KNOW

Otitis Media

A disorder of the ear often caused by the spreading of a cold that produces inflammation of the inner ear.

3. Tinnitus

Tinnitus is characterized by a ringing or a buzzing in the ear and is generally is not a major health threat. If it's not a regular occurrence, it's more of an annoyance than anything else and is generally caused by an ear infection but can also be brought on if you take too much aspirin as well.



TERM TO KNOW

Tinnitus

A disorder of the ear characterized by buzzing or ringing in the ear; often caused by an ear infection.

4. Deafness

Deafness is a complete or partial loss of hearing in one or both ears. Some people who are considered deaf can still hear somewhat, but some people who are deaf cannot hear at all. Causes of deafness can be genetic; some are born deaf. Generally, your hearing starts to decline as you age and is a leading cause of hearing loss or deafness. Certain illnesses can lead to deafness or an injury or a blow to the head can sometimes damage the ear and lead to deafness as well.



TERM TO KNOW

Deafness

A disorder of the ear that results in the inability to hear properly.

5. Vertigo

Vertigo is characterized when the surroundings look like they're spinning, which is essentially dizziness. This is generally caused by a viral infection or an injury that affects your vestibular apparatus. Remember, the vestibular apparatus is an organ within the inner ear that plays a role in balance and equilibrium. If there is some sort of injury or illness that affects the vestibular apparatus, your balance and equilibrium is going to be altered, which may cause spinning or dizzy sensations and even nausea.



TERM TO KNOW

Vertigo

A disorder in which an infection or injury to the ear disrupts the proper functioning of the vestibular apparatus.

6. Motion Sickness

Motion sickness is characterized by dizziness, nausea, or sensitivity to motion. At some point in your life, you've probably experienced some form of motion sickness, whether you've been on a plane, a boat in choppy water, or a car on a windy road.

This is caused by the overstimulation of hair cells in the ear, which disrupts the balance. Hair cells within the ear are mechanoreceptors that help play a role in monitoring the head's position in space. If those are overstimulated, it can lead to this feeling of dizziness or nausea or sensitivity to motion.



TERM TO KNOW

Motion Sickness

A disorder in which hair cells in the ear's organs of equilibrium and balance are over-stimulated, causing feelings of dizziness and nausea.



SUMMARY

This lesson has been an overview of various **disorders of the ear**, their characteristics, and causes. Specifically, you looked at the following ear disorders: **otitis media**, **tinnitus**, **deafness**, **vertigo**, and **motion sickness**.

Keep up the learning and have a great day!

Source: THIS WORK IS ADAPTED FROM SOPHIA AUTHOR AMANDA SODERLIND



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