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Sudden Sensorineural Hearing Loss

Treatment plan

Your provider has recommended treatment for possible sudden sensorineural hearing loss. This is a time sensitive procedure and for best outcomes (improving your hearing) this treatment needs to be started within 8 weeks of initial onset.

Initial appointment: ENT exam + Audiology exam

If your history matches the definition of sudden sensorineural hearing loss your provider may offer you oral steroids and will schedule you for follow up in approximately 10-14 days after starting medication. It is also recommended to have an MRI to rule out an acoustic neuroma as a possible cause.

Follow up appointments: ENT + Audiogram exam

If there is no significant change in hearing thresholds your provider may offer intratympanic (through the ear drum) injection of dexamethasone. This gives the cochlea a higher concentration of dexamethasone (steroid). You will be initially scheduled for three appointments scheduled one week apart.

Hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOT) may also be offered, but only when given along with steroids. In HBOT, you are put in a special room with 100% oxygen for 90 minutes at a time for a total of 10 to 20 treatments. This is typically not covered by insurance

Post treatment and/or onset Audiogram + ENT appointment

Three months after your treatment and/or initial onset of hearing loss a follow up audiological exam is recommended to see if any changes have occurred to your hearing at this time.

Definition

A 30dB sensorineural hearing loss in 3 contiguous frequencies over 72 hours (Wilson et al. 1980) occurring within 2-3 days. This typically happens in one ear but occasionally can happen in both.

Symptoms

A notable change in your hearing that happened over a period of 2-3 days suggests sudden hearing loss. The main symptom of SSNHL is a loss of hearing that is obvious to you. You may also have loud ringing or buzzing (tinnitus), feel pressure or feel like you want to pop your ears, and/or have dizziness or loss of balance (vertigo).

Causes

The majority of Sudden hearing loss is idiopathic (Unknown cause) with only approximately 10% having an identifiable cause. These causes include but are not limited to: Infectious e.g, lyme disease, Autoimmune, vascular, neoplastic, traumatic, neurologic, otologic e.g. Meniere's disease, vestibular schwannoma.