

A most frequently asked question... When to refer my patient to Audiologist or ENT

When a patient has a hearing concern it can be difficult to determine what specialist they might need. As we have had several questions about this in 2021, we thought breaking this down might benefit other providers at the start of 2022!

Refer to an Audiologist if your patient has any of the below as a primary concern:

- Difficulty hearing in both ears
- Failed hearing screening
- Tinnitus or Hyperacusis of both ears
- Hearing difficulties in background noise
- Hearing difficulty with soft sounds



Audiologists specialize in many things: hearing loss, amplification, Presbycusis, Tinnitus, noise protection, and more. However, they cannot diagnose any medical conditions of the outer, middle, or inner ear and must refer to an ENT physician when they find certain red flags.

Refer to an ENT if your patient has any of the below as a primary concern:

- Ear pain or pressure
- Ear drainage / bleeding
- Sudden hearing loss
- Dizziness or vertigo
- Hearing loss that is worse in one ear
- Pulsatile Tinnitus, or Tinnitus in only one ear



Most of the time, general hearing concerns can be referred to an audiologist as a first step.

For example, in people ages 70-79, 55% have age related hearing loss in *both ears*. Only 13% of those in the same age bracket will have hearing loss in just *1 ear*, and they should see an ENT physician as the first step instead of an Audiologist. (Goman, A. M., & Lin, F. R. (2016).

Referring patients to the correct specialist initially saves them frustration, time, money, and gets them the help they need as quickly as possible.

Accepting New Patients!

Our office is open and continues to safely serve our community following CDC guidelines.

*These recommendations do not include all indications nor do they replace clinical judgement in determining the need to consult with an ENT physician.