

## Hearing Impairment

Hearing difficulties can cause problems in a range of daily activities such as talking on the phone, hearing the bedside alarm and participating in group communication. A range of assistive devices have been developed to assist individuals with hearing impairments to overcome such difficulties.



### EQUIPMENT TO ASSIST COMMUNICATION WITH OTHERS

Many standard phones now have the ability to increase the volume of the callers voice. Amplifiers which attach to the telephone ear piece are also available. An extra ringer can be placed away from the phone to enable the phone to be heard from a distance.

Most public telephones have accessibility options, such as volume control and are hearing aid compatible. Alternatively, it may be useful to use a portable telephone amplifier.

A range of personal voice amplification aids may also be used to amplify the speaker's voice during one-on-one conversations or small group situations where there is little background noise.



TTY (telephone typewriter) phones can assist people to communicate over distances by allowing them to type messages over the telephone line. The Australian Communication Exchange (ACE) is a national relay service which relays calls between a person who is using a TTY and a person who is using an audio telephone.

Some mobile telephones can cause interference for people who wear hearing aids, especially those on the GSM digital mobile network. Hands free earphones for phones often do not have this interference. Additionally it is possible to get an induction loop set that is compatible with certain mobile phones and overcomes the problems of interference when using a digital mobile phone with a switch of the hearing aid.



SMS (short messaging system) and MMS (multimedia messaging system) functions of mobile phones are a way in which people can communicate by sending short messages or pictures from one mobile phone to another. Mobile phones are also available with a vibrate function to alert people that their phone is ringing, or a message has been received.

### ALERTS AND ALARMS

Many systems and devices have been designed to alert a person with a hearing impairment of changes in the environment. These devices can amplify the sound of the alarm, alert through visual signals such as a flashing light, or alert through vibrations.



### ASSISTIVE EQUIPMENT FOR USE WITH TELEVISION, RADIO AND VIDEOS

Infrared systems plug into the headphone socket of a television or radio, enabling people to listen through earphones, a headset, or a personal induction loop.

#### LifeTec Queensland

**BRISBANE**  
Level One, Reading Newmarket  
Cnr Newmarket & Enoggera Roads  
(PO Box 3241), Newmarket Qld 4051  
Phone: 07 3552 9000 or 1300 885 886  
Facsimile: 07 3552 9088

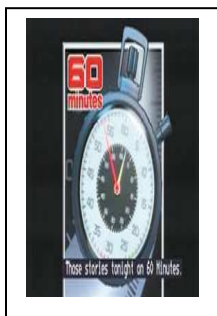
Email: [mail@lifetec.org.au](mailto:mail@lifetec.org.au)  
[www.lifetec.org.au](http://www.lifetec.org.au)  
Independent Living Centre  
Association of Queensland  
Incorporated trading as LifeTec  
Queensland ABN 25 773 960 273

**TOWNSVILLE**  
Shop G-3A, Domain Central  
103 Duckworth Street  
(PO Box 8280), Garbutt, Townsville Qld 4814  
Phone: 07 4759 5600  
Facsimile: 07 4759 5688



Captions (also known as subtitles) are text displayed on televisions, videos, DVD's, and in cinemas. This enables people to follow what is occurring on the screen by reading the text of dialogue and sounds. Television programs that have close captioning are signalled by a S\*, ST or CC on the television screen. You will need to have teletext television to be able to receive captions. Teletext televisions have a caption decoder built into them and are quite common.

Alternatively, you can get a decoder that attaches to a non-teletext television and will provide captions. In order to record programs with captions or watch rental videos that have hidden captions a VCR decoder is also needed.



Most DVD's come with an option of subtitles in their settings or language options.

### **FOR USE AT MEETINGS OR LARGE GATHERINGS**

There are a number of different listening systems that can be used by organisations such as churches, schools, and clubs to assist people with hearing loss. These listening systems are designed to amplify speaker's voices without distortion and background noise.

Large infrared systems can be used in meetings or large gatherings. They require a transmitter to be attached to the source of the sound and the individual with a hearing impairment to wear a receiver.



An induction loop is a loop of cable laid around the edges of a room which enables people wearing hearing aids with a "T" switch or a receiver to tune into a microphone or sound source. Personal loops are also available where a microphone and amplifier are attached to a small loop. Personal loops can come in many different types, such as worn around the neck, a mat that is sat on, and built into a memo pad.

### **NEED TO KNOW MORE?**

Telephone, fax or e-mail your enquiry to obtain further information from one of the therapists about products. Alternatively, you can make an appointment to trial the equipment at our display centres or through our outreach service. Please phone LifeTec Queensland for further details.

Last Updated: March 2009

**BRISBANE**  
Level One, Reading Newmarket  
Cnr Newmarket & Enoggera Roads  
(PO Box 3241), Newmarket Qld 4051  
Phone: 07 3552 9000 or 1300 885 886  
Facsimile: 07 3552 9088

**LifeTec Queensland**  
Email: [mail@lifetec.org.au](mailto:mail@lifetec.org.au)  
[www.lifetec.org.au](http://www.lifetec.org.au)  
Independent Living Centre  
Association of Queensland  
Incorporated trading as LifeTec  
Queensland ABN 25 773 960 273

**TOWNSVILLE**  
Shop G-3A, Domain Central  
103 Duckworth Street  
(PO Box 8280), Garbutt, Townsville Qld 4814  
Phone: 07 4759 5600  
Facsimile: 07 4759 5688

