

Hearing Loss and Masks

Individuals with hearing loss are at higher risk of miscommunication and at its worse, no communication. This can be frustrating, disorientating, isolating, and scary. Standard surgical masks block faces and prevent the ability to see facial expressions, read lips, and establish rapport.



How the Care Team can help...

Strategies to consider:

- ✓ Make sure anyone who has a hearing aid wears them regularly and they are in working order
- ✓ Use gesturing or body language
- ✓ Identify the “better” ear and position yourself to that side when speaking
- ✓ Use written language to augment verbal language- keep in mind whiteboards can be disinfected better than paper
- ✓ Turn off the TV or anything with background noise during conversations
- ✓ Speak louder and in the direction of the individual without distorting or over-articulating the message
- ✓ Rephrase the message
- ✓ Always assess individuals understanding or lack of understanding of the message and the need to use an alternate communication method.
- ✓ Educate family and all care partners



Hearing Loss

- ✓ Approximately 48 million Americans have some degree of hearing loss.
- ✓ Only 1 in 5 people who would benefit from a hearing aid actually uses one.
- ✓ 55% of communication is visual.
- ✓ Hearing depends on a series of events that change sound waves in the air into electrical signals- Masks can interrupt/modify these waves increasing hearing difficulty.
- ✓ Excessive earwax may impede the passage of sound in the ear canal but effective medical treatment will return hearing immediately.

**Improving the lives we touch
with high quality care and
every day compassion!**