

New from NIOSH: Inquiring ears want to know: A fact sheet about your hearing test

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Most miners these days will get an audiogram (hearing test) at some point, but what do the results mean? As NIOSH researchers, we've conducted thousands of hearing tests with miners. We noticed that the same questions keep coming up, so we compiled this fact sheet. For more details on audiograms for miners, check the MSHA publication, Audiometric Testing Reference Guide for MSHA's Occupational Noise Exposure Standard available online at www.msha.gov/1999noise/audiobook731.pdf



Inquiring Ears Want to Know

A fact sheet about your hearing test

This sheet explains your audiogram (hearing test) and gives some basic information about protecting your hearing. Keep it so you can refer to it later.

What is an audiogram?

- An audiogram is often called a "hearing test," but there's no pass or fail
- It is a written record of your hearing levels
- A series of audiograms can track changes in hearing over time
- Your hearing threshold levels (the quietest sounds you can hear) are measured in decibels (dB) at different frequencies from low (500 Hz) to high (8000 Hz)

Why should I get audiograms?

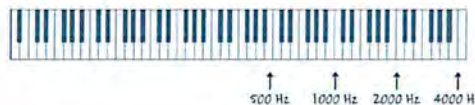
- To measure your hearing ability
- To identify hearing problems
- To monitor success at maintaining your hearing
- To see if noise exposure is affecting your hearing

Do I have normal hearing?

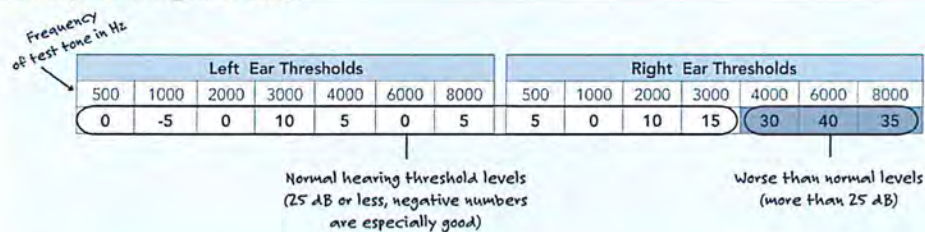
Compare your hearing threshold levels to this scale:

-10 – 25 dB	Normal hearing
26 – 40 dB	Mild loss
41 – 55 dB	Moderate loss
56 – 70 dB	Moderate/severe loss
71 – 90 dB	Severe loss
91 – 100 dB	Profound loss

Audiograms test a range of sounds from low to high frequency (pitch). The test frequencies, measured in Hertz (Hz) usually range from 500 Hz (around the middle of a piano's scale) up to 6000 or 8000 Hz (a little above the highest note a piano can play).



Sample audiogram results



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