

DOCTOR-PATIENT COMMUNICATION: *What you can do*

TABLE 1

The evidence is clear. Because of the effort associated with straining to hear, people with hearing loss tend to miss important information their doctors are telling them, especially when the room is noisy. Studies show that 40-80 percent of medical information we receive from the doctor tends to be forgotten immediately, and nearly half what we do remember is not correct. It is no wonder that people with hearing loss report poorer communication with healthcare providers. And this leads to either having to go back for clarification, or worse, not following through on care properly. This is expensive and risky. Follow the simple steps listed in **Table 1** to maximize communication and reduce your risk:



Top ten communication tips to share with your Doctors

1. Tell them that you have a hearing loss. You can say "I have trouble hearing and understanding speech"
2. Ask them to face you when speaking
3. Ask them to speak slowly and clearly
4. Ask them to rephrase a sentence. You can say, "please rephrase that, I did not understand what you said"
5. Make sure to ask your Doctor to speak with you directly (not with your caregiver)
6. Suggest they make sure their colleagues also know what to do when a patient having difficulty hearing is in the office
7. Make sure you are sitting within 3 to 6 feet of them
8. Ask them to minimize background noise (e.g. turn down TV if in hospital room)
9. Ask them not to look down at the computer when entering information into the electronic medical record
10. Ask them for a written copy of all results and recommendations