Central Auditory Processing Disorder (CAPD)

Central Auditory Processing Disorder (CAPD) - also known as Auditory Processing Disorder (APD) - is an umbrella term for a variety of disorders that result in a breakdown in the hearing process.

In short, our brain cannot make sense of what our ears hear because the auditory signal is distorted in some way. As a result, one of the biggest problems experienced by individuals with CAPD is difficulty listening in background noise.

Assessing for CAPD at Australian Hearing

A service is now available at selected Australian Hearing centres which diagnoses, manages and remediates CAPD.

This service involves:

- a CAPD assessment appointment with a qualified clinician
- after the assessment appointment the clinician will develop an appropriate management or remediation program in consultation with the parent(s) if the child is diagnosed with CAPD.

The service is currently available for children aged six and above who do not have a hearing loss and:

- are suspected to have CAPD
- have difficulty understanding speech in noisy situations, such as in the classroom.

Australian Hearing’s CAPD assessment and management service is provided on a fee-for-service basis.

For more details on the fee structure, contact Australian Hearing on 1300 256 874.

For more information

If you wish to make an appointment for your child to be assessed for CAPD at Australian Hearing, or would like further information, contact Australian Hearing on 1300 256 874.

You can also ask about the locations of Australian Hearing centres offering the CAPD assessment and management service.
Frequently asked questions & answers about Australian Hearing’s CAPD assessment

I’ve been told that my child needs a CAPD assessment. What does that involve?

- A number of central auditory processing tests can be used to assess CAPD.
- At Australian Hearing, we focus on identifying auditory deficits that are likely to lead to listening difficulties and poorer performance in the classroom. This includes how well your child hears in background noise.
- We aim to tailor our tests to suit the individual child and as such, what is included in each assessment may differ slightly between children.
- If we find that your child has a difficulty in an area of auditory processing we will then discuss management and auditory training options with you.
- If you decide to proceed with any of these management or training options we will arrange further appointments to implement these options.

What tests do Australian Hearing use to diagnose CAPD?

- We use the Listening in Spatialized Noise – Sentence test (LiSN-S). This was developed by the National Acoustic Laboratories (the research arm of Australian Hearing), and has been shown to diagnose a major cause of listening difficulty in noise.
- LiSN-S is a breakthrough in the acoustic assessment of children because it allows clinicians to measure how well a child uses the spatial information in sound to understand speech in noise.
- The Dichotic Digits Test could also be used to assess the ability of your child to process different information being presented to each ear at the same time. The ability to integrate information is important for effective classroom listening.
- We may also use two tests of auditory memory, a Number Memory Forward test (to assess short-term auditory memory), and a Number Memory Reversed test (for auditory working memory). Deficits in these areas can affect a child’s performance in the classroom and lead to flow on effects, such as auditory fatigue.

What do the training and management options involve?

- If your child is assessed as having a deficit that is causing listening difficulty, your clinician will discuss the most appropriate option with you based on your child’s test results.
- A child with CAPD can be supported through three different approaches:
  - environmental modifications to improve access to auditory information
  - remediation of deficient auditory abilities through auditory training
  - teaching coping strategies to enhance abilities.
- Australian Hearing offers a range of options depending on the areas of weakness identified at the assessment appointment. These options can be combined:
  - at-home computer-based auditory training
  - assistive listening devices, such as FM systems
  - advice on specific environmental modifications and compensatory strategies

Who is Australian Hearing?

Australian Hearing is the largest hearing services provider for children, young adults, pensioners, veterans and Indigenous people in Australia.

We have a national network of over 110 permanent centres and more than 330 visiting sites. We also visit 220 Indigenous outreach sites in urban, rural and remote areas.

Last year, Australian Hearing provided over 445,000 hearing health services to clients.

The National Acoustic Laboratories is the research division of Australian Hearing. It is internationally renowned for its work on hearing loss and treatment innovations.

More information about Australian Hearing’s CAPD service trial program is available in the information booklet we send out to you prior to attending an assessment appointment or by calling Australian Hearing on 1300 256 874.

You can also find more details on NAL’s work on CAPD at http://capd.nal.gov.au

1300 256 874
www.hearing.com.au