



We Hear With Our Brain

Carol Flexer, PhD: Well, let's talk about the brain. See, people typically think that we hear with ears, and that hearing loss, therefore, is an ear issue. But actually we hear with the brain, and the ears are the route that the sound takes on its way to the brain, where hearing actually occurs.

So, here's a way to think about hearing loss: Think about hearing loss as a "doorway" problem, because the ears are the "doorway" to the brain. And what happens with hearing loss is that doorway get obstructed, maybe a little bit... maybe a lot. And when that doorway gets obstructed, even a little, then sound does not reach the brain with high integrity. Now, when we talk about sound reaching the brain, what we're really talking about is auditory information. It's information... knowledge... that needs to go through the doorway, to the brain. And any doorway obstruction interferes with knowledge, with auditory information reaching the brain. Now hearing aids, cochlear implants... FM systems, bone anchored technology... They're all designed to break through that doorway and deliver auditory information to the brain. So hearing loss is a "doorway" problem because the actual hearing occurs in the brain.