Hill Country

Ear, Nose, and Throat, P.A.

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Sudden Sensorineural Hearing Loss

An Otologic emergency

Sudden Sensorineural Hearing Loss (SSNHL) is an abrupt loss of hearing (usually in one ear that occurs over hours to days. The incidence is estimated at 10 per 100,000 in the united states. It is often not possible to determine the pathophysiology and etiology that causes SSNHL, therefore, it is difficult to treat.

Possible causes:

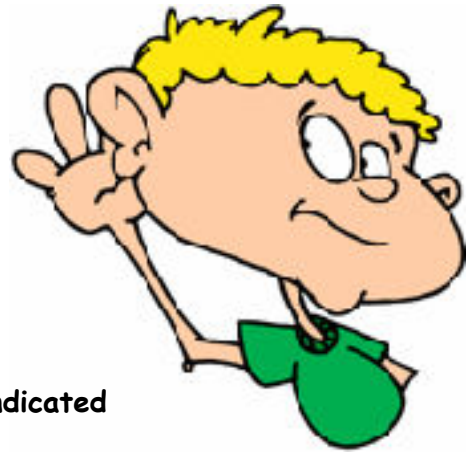
- **Viral infection** such as mumps, measles, herpes, or Epstein -Barr virus resulting in inner ear inflammation.
- **Vascular** such as atherosclerosis, hypercoagulability, aneurysm, or arteriovenous malformations
- **Autoimmune Disorders**
- **Syphilis**
- **Trauma** such as barotrauma, sudden change in middle ear pressure, temporal bone trauma
- **Acoustic Neuroma** -About 1% of patients with SSNHL will have an acoustic neuroma (a benign growth on the main nerve leading from the inner ear to the brain)
- **Meniere's Disease** usually accompanied by dizziness, ringing in the ear, and /or ear fullness
- **Bacterial infection** such as mycoplasma

Diagnostics:

- Comprehensive Hearing Evaluation
- Microscopic ear exam
- MRI of the brain
- Syphilis testing if indicated
- Consider lab work if indicated (autoimmune labs)

Medical Treatments:

1. **Reduce Inflammation**
   - High dose oral steroids are the primary treatment
   - Intratympanic steroid injections



1. **Combat Infectious etiology if indicated**
   - Anti- viral- Acyclovir or Famciclovir
   - Anti-bacterial – Azithromycin or Clarithromycin

2. **Treat Endolymphatic hydrops (Meniere's disease) if indicated**
   - Diuretic, such as Dyazide
   - Low salt diet and minimize caffeine intake

<u>*Early detection and treatment is essential to help restore hearing. *</u>

***Hearing precautions is very important to prevent further damage in both ears.**
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