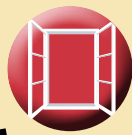


I'll Have the Scallops and Hold the Loud Noise

Maximize your listening experience while dining in a restaurant

When you dine out with friends, you don't expect to find yourself in the middle of an echo chamber. But that's often what happens to those with hearing difficulties, especially in restaurants with sleek hardwood floors, high ceilings, wall-to-wall windows, and, of course, the loud music playing in the background better suited for a rock concert than a dining experience.

Here are the five main areas to avoid when eating out.



OPEN WINDOWS

Chirping birds may be nice, but noise from passing cars and sidewalk traffic can be an obstacle to better hearing.



KITCHEN

Even in the quietest of restaurants, the kitchen is still one of the loudest areas. Avoid sitting near the kitchen door and you'll enjoy much more of your dinner conversation.



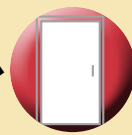
RESTROOMS

The most heavily trafficked area of a restaurant is often the hallway to and from the public restrooms.



WAITER STATION

The clink of glasses and dishes can easily be a distraction when you're seated next to the waiter station.



FRONT DOOR

With each new customer walking in the door comes more noise and another distraction from your own dinner conversation.

So, Where Should You Sit?

Public places present a challenge for the hearing device user. Here are some tips to help you hear your best so you can enjoy dinner out with friends and family.

- Don't be shy. Tell the host, waiter and your dining companions you have a hearing loss, and request they slow down their speech, speak a little louder and face you directly while talking— you'll be glad you did.
- If your hearing devices are set to "directional," remember to sit with your back to the main source of noise.
- Remember, noisy environments affect everyone's hearing, even those without hearing difficulties.
- Find carpeted restaurants with rolling chairs, plants and sound-absorbent materials on the tables and walls.
- Choose less busy days and times to dine out.
- Dine with a smaller number of people.
- Request that the staff turn down background music.

Communication is a Two-Way Street

Conversation is a collaborative effort between speaker and listener. The following suggestions will help both the normal hearing (in this case, the speaker) and the hearing impaired (the listener) understand each other better:

SPEAKERS

Speak in a slightly louder normal voice.

Do not shout. Shouting distorts not only the voice quality, but also the lip movements. Speak at a slightly slower rate. Do not exaggerate lip movements.

Be visible.

First, attract the hearing impaired person's attention (e.g., tap them lightly on the shoulder). Remember to sit close to the person, preferably 4-6 feet away, at eye-level when speaking.

Proximity may be the single most important thing you can do to help the conversation's success. Avoid eating, gum chewing, or covering your mouth when speaking. In addition, adequate lighting should be available.

Use facial expressions.

This can help the listener remain on-topic and pick up on cues of the conversation. Appropriate gestures, if not overdone, can be helpful. Try to avoid too many visual distractions.

LISTENERS

Inform others.

Do not hide the fact that you wear a hearing instrument or that you depend on speech reading to understand conversation. By letting others know about your situation, you will make communication easier for all involved.

Select your setting.

If possible, avoid communicating in a noisy place. The best environments for conversations are those free of background noises. When convenient, turn off the television, radio, stereo, dishwasher or other background noises, and shut windows and doors to enhance communication.



Learn speech reading.

Consider taking a course in lip reading or practice it on your own. Speech reading can't replace a hearing instrument, but it can supplement your use of a device and will make conversations easier to understand.

For more tips on communicating with hearing loss, contact your AudigyCertified™ professional.

