



## Press Release

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# FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## National Hearing Test Offers Free Screen in May To Celebrate National Better Hearing and Speech Month

*Phone-based test providing affordable, accurate, and widely available screening for tens of millions of Americans suffering from hearing loss free in May*

**BLOOMINGTON, INDIANA – April 25, 2014** – Nearly half of adults over the age of 48 experience hearing loss, and yet very few actually seek help. Left untreated, hearing loss can lead to job loss and income reduction, social isolation, embarrassment, and significantly lower quality of life. Hearing loss is irreversible, but if caught early, steps can be taken to keep it from worsening.

This was the impetus for a new hearing test now widely available in the United States and offered for free in May in recognition of National Better Hearing and Speech Month.

Developed by hearing scientists with funding from the National Institutes of Health, the National Hearing Test is a quick and accurate hearing screening. The screening can be conveniently taken over a telephone in the privacy of the home. It is provided on a non-profit basis as a public service and has no financial connection with any hearing products or services. The test regularly costs \$8.

Communication Disorders Technology, Inc. launched the National Hearing Test, the country's first widely available phone-based test to provide tens of millions of hearing-impaired Americans with a scientifically valid, affordable test to screen for hearing impairment.

The first test of its kind in the United States, the National Hearing Test overcomes many obstacles preventing people from being screened for hearing loss, including inconvenience and cost.

Hearing tests are currently either offered as “free” by hearing aid dealers with the cost of the test paid through the purchase of hearing aids or by appointment with an audiologist

or by a physician specializing in hearing for a fee of up to \$150. The National Hearing Test is a not-for-profit project available to anyone by phone.

The National Hearing Test works by having callers listen to a series of spoken three-digit numbers (“3-5-1”) that are presented with a noise background. When the caller enters the numbers correctly, the next numbers are presented at a lower, more difficult level. If an error is made, the next numbers are easier to hear. The user’s accuracy is measured in real time to determine the extent of hearing loss.

“Research shows that early intervention in hearing loss leads to better quality of life and greater success with hearing aids,” said Dr. Charles Watson, chief scientist for the National Hearing Test in the United States and professor emeritus of speech and hearing sciences at Indiana University, Bloomington. “Consequently, it’s important for anyone who suspects they’ve suffered hearing loss to have their hearing tested and that a low-cost, convenient test be made widely available.”

Dr. Watson stressed that, “While the telephone-administered test provides an accurate estimate of a person’s hearing in the speech-frequency range, it is not a substitute for a full hearing evaluation by an audiologist. The screening test is for those who suspect they might have a hearing problem but are not convinced enough to make that appointment. Some callers pass the test and are relieved, while others fail and are advised to seek a full evaluation.”

#### **About the National Hearing Test Project**

The National Hearing Test was developed by Bloomington, Indiana-based Communication Disorders Technology, Inc., in partnership with Indiana University and the VU Medical Center of Amsterdam and with grant funding from the National Institutes of Health. Learn more about the National Hearing Test at [www.nationalhearingtest.org](http://www.nationalhearingtest.org).

#### **About Communication Disorders Technology, Inc.**

Founded in 1989 by speech and hearing researchers at Indiana University, Communication Disorders Technology, Inc. develops software to treat speech, language, and hearing disorders. Visit Communications Disorders Technology, Inc. online at [www.comdistec.com](http://www.comdistec.com).