

THE NATIONAL HEARING TEST

Press Kit/June 2014



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Media Contacts

Indianapolis, Indiana and National Contact

Alex Crowley

Project Manager for the National Hearing Test

Work: (812) 336-1766

Mobile: (812)360-5566

crowley@nationalhearingtest.org

Louisville, Kentucky Contact

Radi Bombard

Marketing Director for the National Hearing Test

Work: (812) 336-1766

rtbombard@nationalhearingtest.org

Office Location:

3100 John Hinkle Place, Suite 107

Bloomington, IN 47408

Office hours: 9am to 5pm, Mon-Fri

General Inquiries:

media@nationalhearingtest.org

(866) 587-8114

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www.nationalhearingtest.org



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Quick Facts about the National Hearing Test

What is it? The National Hearing Test is a screening test for hearing loss that is self-administered simply and conveniently over the telephone.

Why is it important? Approximately 36 million Americans have significant hearing loss, yet as many as half have never had their hearing tested. Untreated hearing loss can lead to a serious decline in your quality of life, causing social isolation, problems on the job, and frequent embarrassment. The National Hearing Test is a simple and scientifically validated screening test. It can be the first step on your path to taking charge of your hearing health.

Who developed it? The test was developed through a collaboration between Communication Disorders Technology, Inc., Indiana University, and VU University Medical Center of Amsterdam. The National Telephone Test was developed with the support of the National Institute for Deafness and other Communication Disorders of the National Institutes of Health, under Grant No. 3R43DC009719. The content of this website is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the National Institutes of Health.

Communication Disorders Technology, Inc (*CDT*). CDT was formed in 1989 by Charles S. Watson and Diane Kewley-Port, Professors of Speech and Hearing Sciences at Indiana University, and Daniel P. Maki, Professor of Mathematics at Indiana University.

How does the test work? You simply call from a landline phone and enter your Access Code to start the test. You listen to three-digit sequences that are spoken with a noise background. and use the keypad to enter what you heard. If you are doing well, the test becomes more difficult, by making it harder to hear the digits. If you are making errors, the test gets easier. This method provides a very accurate assessment of your ability to distinguish spoken words in different levels of background noise. Immediately after the test, you are told the results for each ear, which will help you make an informed decision as to whether you should see an audiologist to have a complete hearing evaluation.

How much does it cost?

The test is completely free through June, 2014. One simply dials 866-223-7575, toll-free, from a landline telephone

What kind of hearing loss does the test detect? This hearing screening is very effective at detecting the most common forms of hearing losses, those that are age-related and those that result from exposure to loud noises.

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Press Release

Contact: Alex Crowley | Project Manager | National Hearing Test | 812-336-1766 | crowley@nationalhearingtest.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

30,000 Americans Take National Hearing Test in May; Free Period Extended through June

Free phone-based screening aims to reach 100,000 people with affordable, accurate, widely available test by end of month

BLOOMINGTON, INDIANA – June 10, 2014 – Will Americans welcome a free over-the-phone hearing test developed by Indiana researchers and funded by a grant from NIH? As news about the test spreads, the answer seems to be a resounding “Yes!”

“Many European countries and Australia already offer this kind of test,” said Dr. Charles Watson, chief scientist for the National Hearing Test. “Nearly half of adults over 48 experience hearing loss, yet few seek help. The National Hearing Test lets them assess their own hearing by phone in the privacy of their own homes.”

Left untreated, hearing loss can lead to job problems 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 its effects from worsening.

This was the impetus for a new hearing test now widely available in the United States and offered free during June. Within one month of the National Hearing Test’s first major national push, more than 30,000 Americans have used the service.

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 one’s home or office. To take the test, a person simply calls the toll-free National Hearing Test number at (866) 223-7575 and follows the directions provided. The test takes approximately 10 minutes.

The National Hearing Test 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.

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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”) 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. Watson, chief scientist for the 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 sufficiently convinced 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 the support of the National Institute for Deafness and Other Communication Disorders of the National Institutes of Health, under Grant No. 3R43DC009719. Learn more about the National Hearing Test at www.nationalhearingtest.org. To take the National Hearing Test, call (866) 223-7575 and follow the directions provided.

About Communication Disorders Technology, Inc.

Founded in 1989 by two speech and hearing researchers and a mathematician 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.

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Scientists Who Developed the Test

Charles S. Watson

Principal investigator, development of the U.S. version of the National Hearing Test
Former chair, Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences at Indiana University
Former Director of Research, Boys Town National Research Hospital in Omaha
President, Communication Disorders Technology, Inc.

Larry Humes

Distinguished Professor, Department of Speech & Hearing Sciences, Indiana University
Chair, Department of Speech & Hearing Sciences, Indiana University

Gary Kidd

Associate Scientist, Department of Speech & Hearing Sciences, Indiana University
Senior Scientist, Communication Disorders Technology, Inc.

James Miller

Principal Scientist, Communication Disorders Technology, Inc.
Emeritus Director of Research, Central Institute for the Deaf in St. Louis
Adjunct Professor, Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences at Indiana University
Professor Emeritus, Washington University in St. Louis

Cas Smits

Professor, Engineering & Biophysics
VU University Medical Center, Amsterdam
Originator of digits-in-noise test first used in the Netherlands and later replicated in many countries

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Current Press Collection

[Over-the-phone hearing test offered free in June](#)

Posted June 10, 2014 by Debbie Bock, *The Westlake Bay Village Observer*, Westlake, Ohio

[National Hearing Test offers free hearing screening from home through June](#)

Posted June 4, 2014 by Rebecca Catalanello, *The Times-Picayune*, New Orleans, Louisiana

[As we age, hearing loss is common – but quite treatable](#)

Posted June 3, 2014 by Susan Bloom, *The Ashbury Park Press*, Neptune, New Jersey

[Free phone test screens for hearing loss](#)

Posted June 1, 2014, *Knoxville News Sentential*, Knoxville, Tennessee

[Hearing test via phone increases awareness](#)

Posted May 31, 2014 by Misti Crane, *The Columbus Dispatch*, Columbus Ohio

[Hearing test? Call it in](#)

Posted May 28, 2014, *Jacksonville Daily News*, Jacksonville, North Carolina

[Listen up: This hotline can check your hearing](#)

Posted May 20, 2014 by Darla Carter, *The Courier-Journal*, Louisville, Kentucky

[Free hearing test available by telephone](#)

Posted May 20, 2014, by Barb Berggoetz, *The Indianapolis Star*, Indianapolis, Indiana

[How's your hearing? Find out with free hearing test over the phone](#)

Posted May 17, 2014 by Angela Townsend, *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, Cleveland, Ohio

[Free Hearing Screenings During Better Speech and Hearing Month](#)

Posted May 17, 2014 b, *KCDHH* by Kim Brannock (The Kentucky Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing), surfky.com, Frankfort, Kentucky

[Take this hearing test right now. I did, and the results were disturbing](#)

Posted May 16, 2014 by Lenny Bernstein, *The Washington Post*, Washington DC

[Telephone hearing test offered](#)

Posted May 16, 2014, *News and Tribune*, Clark County, Indiana

[Giving help, getting help, May 16](#)

Posted May 16, 2014, The State, Columbia, South Carolina

[Free over-the-phone hearing test in May, part of Better Speech and Hearing Month](#)

Posted May 14, 2014, *KCDHH* (The Kentucky Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing), kyforward.com, Frankfort, Kentucky

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[What? A hearing test you can take on the phone?](#)

Posted May 14, 2014 by Barbara Peters Smith, *Herald Tribune*, Sarasota, Florida

[A new hearing test available over the phone is free for month of May](#)

Posted May 14, 2014 by Michele Munz, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, St. Louis, Missouri

[Health Notes: Nemours, St. Vincent's named to list of '150 Great Places to Work in Healthcare'](#)

Posted May 13, 2014, *The Florida Times-Union*, Jacksonville, Florida

[How's your hearing? Take this free test over the phone to find out](#)

Posted May 5, 2014 by Katy Muldoon, *The Oregonian*, Portland, Oregon

[Charlotte agency offers low-cost hearing aids for low-income clients](#)

Posted May 5, 2014 by Karen Garloch, *Charlotte Observer*, Charlotte, North Carolina

[Say What? Free Do-It-Yourself Hearing Test Available by Phone](#)

Posted May 5, 2014 by Kathleen O'Brien, *The Star-Ledger*, New Jersey

[Free Hearing Test This Month](#)

Posted May 4, 2014 by Stephanie Innes, *Arizona Daily Star*, Tucson, Arizona

[Great Day Live: "National Hearing Tests's Telephone Screenings"](#)

Aired April 22, 2014, on WHAS 11 in Louisville Kentucky

[Hearing Test coming to Bloomington](#)

Posted September 25, 2013, *Indiana Daily Student*, Indianapolis, Indiana

[Sound Medicine Checkup: "National Hearing Test"](#)

Aired September 15, 2013, on WFYI, WFIU, and other public radio stations

[Sound Medicine](#) is a weekly talk radio show about medical matters, sponsored by the Indiana University School of Medicine and WFYI, 90.1 FM, the Indianapolis NPR affiliate.