



HCHS/SOL Question by Question Instructions Hearing Exam Form (HEE/HES), Version A

General Instructions

The Hearing Exam Questionnaire is to be asked at the time of the hearing examination before conducting the hearing testing. The purpose of these questions is to provide information that will be used during testing (i.e. determining which ear to test first) and to provide information that will be used when reviewing the results and analyzing the data. These questions must be answered directly by the participant, no proxy respondents. The questions must be asked before the hearing examination begins. Encourage participants to select the answer that best fits their experiences. Mark only one response per item.

Question by Question Instructions

Q1. Do you feel you have a hearing loss?

Ask of all. This is the participant's perception.

Q2. Which is your better ear?

Again, the participant's perception. Use this information to determine first test ear. If "no difference" or "unknown start with right ear.

Q3. Was your hearing loss sudden or gradual?

Participant's opinion.

Q4. How old were you when your hearing loss developed?

Read choices so that the participant knows we're looking for the age group not a precise recollection of the exact age.

Q5. Tinnitus is defined as ringing, buzzing or noise (including roaring) in the ears.

In the past year have you had buzzing, ringing or noise in your ears?

Determine if he/she has had tinnitus in the past year. Odd or unusual noises on a single occasion do not count as tinnitus. Any episode of ringing, buzzing or noise is considered a positive response.

Q6. Does this noise usually last longer than 5 minutes?

The buzzing, ringing or noise must last a continuous 5 minutes.

Q7. Do you hear this noise only following very loud sounds (i.e. concerts, shooting, or noise at work)?

The correct response is yes if the buzzing, ringing or noise is attributable to exposure to a loud noise on all occasions when tinnitus is experienced. If tinnitus is ever experienced when there has been no noise exposure the correct response is no.

Q8. Does this noise cause you to have problems getting to sleep?

Determine whether the tinnitus causes the person to have trouble sleeping.

Q9. In the past 12 months, how often have you had this ringing, roaring, or buzzing in your ears or head?

Read categories and encourage the participant to select one. Although the wording is slightly different than tinnitus questions 5 – 8 (this question is taken verbatim from NHANES), any report of noise in the ear counts as tinnitus.

Q10. When was the last time you saw a doctor or other health care professional about any hearing or ear problems?

Read categories and encourage the participant to select one.

Q11. When was the last time you had your hearing tested?

This would include a hearing test given by a doctor, audiologist, or hearing aid distributor. Hearing tests given at work and at health fairs count as having had a hearing test.

Q12. Have you ever had surgery on your ears?

Any form of surgery on any part of the ear (outer, middle, or inner). If the participant has had more than one surgical procedure, record the information on the most recent surgery.

Q13. What type of surgery was done?

Tympanoplasty is surgical correction of damage to the middle ear. Mastoidectomy involves the removal of the mastoid bone (behind the ear) and the opening of diseased mastoid air cells. A stapedectomy involves removal of a portion of the stapes bone (a small bone in the inner ear) and replacing it with a prosthesis to restore the ear's ability to transmit sound. A cochlear implant is an electronic prosthesis, surgically implanted in the ear, that can restore a sense of sound to people with hearing impairment. Some participants may not be familiar with the medical term for their procedure. If the description the participant provides matches any of the descriptions for choices 1 – 4, code as such. If uncertain, or if the participant is unable to describe the procedure, record as 5.

Q14. Have you ever had tubes in your ears?

This question refers to tubes inserted into the eardrum, usually as a treatment for middle ear infections.

Q15. Do you have tubes in your ears now?

We want to know if the participant currently has a tube in one or both ears. Try to identify which ear the participant thinks has the tube.

Questions 16 – 18 refer to rare auditory disorders. The condition must be diagnosed by a physician.

Q16. Have you ever had an acoustic neuroma?

An acoustic neuroma is a tumor on the auditory nerve. The participant may not be aware of the medical term. If he or she reports that they have had a tumor and that the tumor was on a nerve affecting their ear, code as yes. Tumors that are not on a nerve should be coded as no.

Q17. Have you ever had a cholesteatoma?

A cholesteatoma is a mass or growth in the middle ear.

Q18. Has a doctor ever told you that you have Meniere's Disease?

Meniere's Disease is a syndrome characterized by nausea, vomiting, tinnitus (ringing in the ears) and progressive hearing loss.

Q19. Has a doctor ever told you that you have otosclerosis?

Otosclerosis is a disorder of the bones of the middle ear.

Q20. Have you had a cold, sinus problem, or earache in the last 24 hours?

A cold refers to a disorder of the upper respiratory tract. A sinus problem refers to an inflammation of the sinuses. Allergies are included if they have resulted in a reaction within the upper respiratory system or sinuses. If the participant is unsure if he or she has had either of these, probe for any of the following conditions: runny nose, stuffy head, slight temperature, chills, sinus headache. If the participant has had any of these symptoms in the past 24 hours, record a positive answer. An earache refers to any pain within the ear, regardless of severity. It does not include pain on the external ear.

Q21. Have you been exposed to loud music or listened to music with headphones in the past 24 hours?

Music is defined as "loud" if (1) someone would have had to raise their voice in order to be heard 3 feet away; or if (2) ringing in the ear was noticed after the music ended.

Q22. Have you been exposed to any other loud noise in the past 24 hours?

Noise is defined as "loud" if (1) someone would have had to raise their voice in order to be heard 3 feet away; or if (2) ringing in the ear was noticed after the noise ended.