

# AUDITORY PROCESSING DISORDER (APD)

**Auditory processing disorder (APD)**, also known as central auditory processing disorder (CAPD), is a condition that impacts the brain's ability to filter and interpret sounds. People with APD can hear, but have a hard time receiving, organizing, and processing auditory information. APD often emerges in childhood as the difficulty of their schooling increases. Children with APD will typically begin showing signs of increased struggles as they work to keep up with these new challenges.

- APD prevents someone from easily understanding a spoken message leading to trouble recognizing sounds in words and/or mix up sounds and words completely.
- APD symptoms heighten in the presence of background noise.
- APD is independent from hearing loss and intelligence.
- APD can impact people of all ages, and in different ways.
- The management of APD is dependent on which process(es) are disordered, but may include a combination of environmental modifications, compensatory strategies, and assistive listening devices.
- To determine if someone has APD, hearing loss must first be ruled out as a contributing factor.

[Contact RHSC to schedule an appointment and learn more about APD:](#)

Call (585) 721-0681 or email [info@rhsc.org](mailto:info@rhsc.org).

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-Over | Q & A-



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**Q: What is Auditory Processing Disorder (APD)?**

A: APD is an umbrella term to label a spectrum of disorders related to the central auditory nervous system. An individual with APD may have one or several specific issues with processing auditory information, even though he/she has normal hearing sensitivity. To summarize, an individual may hear what someone is saying with their normally functioning ears, but are not able to process and understand the information once it gets to the brain.

**Q: What are common issues individuals with APD may experience?**

A: Many individuals with APD will report significant difficulty understanding speech in the presence of background noise, rapidly spoken speech, or distorted speech. An individual may also experience difficulty localizing to sound in their environment as well as following and learning melodies and songs. They may also take longer to answer questions, and may offer inappropriate responses to questions and statements. In turn, individuals may exhibit reading, writing, and spelling difficulties, an inability to follow multi-step directions, an inability to take notes in class, and they often feel exhausted after listening for extended periods of time.

**Q: How can unidentified and untreated APD impact my child?**

A: Children with APD commonly experience difficulties following along in class. They may appear lost or that they are zoning out, have issues following directions, and may experience reading, writing, and spelling difficulties. A child intensely trying to understand and process the information that is crucial for their academic success will tend to become mentally fatigued from their listening efforts, and their academic performance may begin to lag behind their classmates.

**Q: How do I know if I/my child has APD?**

A: To confirm an APD, a hearing test would first be completed to determine if normal hearing sensitivity is present. If normal hearing sensitivity is identified, an extensive test battery would then be completed to obtain information regarding several auditory processes. This would determine whether performance is normal or abnormal.

**Q: How do we test for APD?**

A: Different tests of auditory processes are used to determine if a disorder exists, and to specify which type of auditory processes may be disordered. The tests are a variety of listening tasks, primarily repeating words and sentences in varying conditions, as well as ordering and labeling tonal patterns.

**Q: How is APD treated and/or is there a cure?**

A: Unfortunately, there is no cure for APD. There are several listening and compensatory strategies, environmental modifications, and hearing technologies that when warranted, may be implemented to strengthen skills related to higher order processes. The strategies may improve listening, reading, and writing skills, reduce mental strain, and help maintain signal/speech quality in difficult listening environments. Unfortunately, there is currently no cure for APD.

**Q: Can anyone complete APD testing?**

A: Most people can, but not everyone. At this time, the individual must be at least six years old, and must be able to reliably complete the test battery to ensure a valid interpretation of findings.

You can also contact Rochester Hearing and Speech Center to schedule an appointment.

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