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# THE NATIONAL HEARING TEST

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Press Kit/September 2013



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### Learn More

[www.nationalhearingtest.org](http://www.nationalhearingtest.org)

Twitter: @nationalHT

Facebook: NationalHearingTest

## 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. You buy an access code at the National Hearing Test website, then dial the toll-free number to begin.

**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, affordable, 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. Support for this project was provided by 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?** \$8 per test. The test is made available on a non-profit basis. The fee is used to pay for the toll-free telephone line, the computer system that controls the test and provides feedback, administration, promotion or the test, and the costs of follow up to answer questions about your performance on the test.

**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.

## Press Release

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **National Hearing Test Launches In Indianapolis**

Phone-based test provides affordable, accurate, and widely available screening for tens of millions of Americans suffering from hearing loss.

**BLOOMINGTON – September 19, 2013** – To aid the approximately 36 million people in the United States who suffer significant hearing loss – nearly half of whom have never had their hearing tested – Communication Disorders Technology, Inc. is launching the National Hearing Test, the country’s first ever widely available, phone-based test aimed at providing tens of millions of hearing-impaired Americans with a scientifically valid, affordable test to screen for hearing impairment. As of September 19, the test will be available in Indianapolis and surrounding communities.

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. Unlike most current hearing tests, many of which are offered by hearing aid companies and require patients to make an appointment with an audiologist (and can lead to costs of up to \$150), the National Hearing Test is a not-for-profit project available to anyone by phone and costs only \$8. The National Hearing Test works by having callers listen to a series of spoken numbers that are presented with a noise background. When the caller enters a series of numbers correctly, the next numbers are presented at a lower, more difficult level. The user’s accuracy is measured in real time to determine the extent of hearing loss.

Left untreated, hearing loss can lead to job loss and income reduction, social isolation, embarrassment, and significantly lower quality of life. It is therefore crucial, experts agree, to detect and treat hearing loss in its initial stages.

“Research shows that early intervention in hearing loss leads to better quality of life and greater success with hearing aids,” says Dr. Charles Watson, chief scientist for the National Hearing Test in the U.S. 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.”

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 CDT online at [www.comdistec.com](http://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

### **Sound Medicine Checkup: “National Hearing Test” – WFYI Indianapolis**

Aired September 15, 2013, on WFYI, WTIU, and dozens of other public radio stations throughout Indiana and across the United States

<http://soundmedicine.iu.edu/segment/3807/Can-you-hear-me->