



My parents and I at a recent lunch. Background noise hampered our conversation.

# Hearing matters

## Round 3: Background noises vs. pleasant conversation

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**B**ackground noise in a restaurant can turn a pleasant conversation into a frustrating muddle of “What?” and “Say again.” In order to hear better and enjoy conversations more while dining out, consider these suggestions.

Ask for a table in a corner or one where you can sit with your back to a wall. Put voices and the noise in front of you. If you wear hearing aids, adjust them to their noise reduction setting. This will reduce the clatter and disruptive nature of background noise and allow you to focus more easily on the voices you want to hear.

If the restaurant has different rooms or sections with solid partitions, ask for a table

### GOLDEN HEARING RULE

Sit with your back to a wall.  
Put voices and noise in front of you.



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in the smallest area. A smaller room reduces the disruptive background noise compared with a larger room. Again, keep your back to a wall if possible.

Tell your waiter or wait-

ress to talk a little slower than normal so you can hear them more clearly. Similarly, you will hear the people in your group better if they speak a little slower.

Restaurants can take steps to help with noise, too. They can train their staff to maintain good eye contact and speak a little slower. Smaller sitting areas with solid partitions help reduce noise transfer. Carpeting isn't a favorite of restaurant owners, but it can help reduce noise tremendously. With high ceilings, even small sound baffles hanging from the ceiling keeps sounds from bouncing around so much.

If you are concerned about your hearing, contact me at the Better Hearing Center 512-282-4327 for a complimentary appointment.