



What does it mean to be deaf?

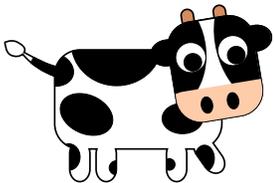
My name is **Invincible Vinny**. I was born deaf. That means my ears don't hear sounds the same way that some other dogs' ears do. Some dogs hear their people coming home after an outing. My ears don't hear that, so I just continue sleeping when my person comes home until she wakes me up.

Some dogs hear dog food being mixed up in their dog bowl. My ears don't hear that either. Thank goodness I have a super nose, though! I can smell that food being mixed up in my bowl so I know it's almost time to eat!



Being deaf is not scary, and it doesn't hurt. It's just how I live my life. It's like being in a very quiet place all the time. I don't hear sounds, but I can do many fun and exciting things!

My person has learned to talk to me even though I can't hear her voice. She uses signals to tell me what I need to know. She uses one signal if we are going for a ride in the car. She uses other signals when we are going for a walk or playing a game, and even more signals when she wants me to sit or shake hands



Did you know that some other dogs are deaf, too? Even some other animals like cats, cows, or birds can be deaf! And some people can be deaf too. You might know someone who is deaf or hearing impaired.

Some people can hear better when they use a special device that they wear on their ears. It helps make sounds louder so they can hear more clearly. Blinking lights can let people know when someone rings the doorbell if they can't hear the noise of the bell.



I don't know of these special ear devices made for dogs, but I do know that my person can flash the light on and off to get my attention. I can also feel my person's phone vibrating if I'm close to it, even though I can't hear it ring. Vibration can be useful to give people who are deaf information about when an alarm is buzzing. Some alarm clocks even vibrate under a person's pillow to wake them up! Isn't that neat?



Have you ever watched TV when there are words on the bottom of the screen to show what the TV people are saying? That is called closed captioning and it lets people enjoy what is happening on the TV if they aren't able to hear it. Have you ever watched the TV with the sound off and read the closed captioning on the screen instead?

Some people have specially-trained hearing dogs to let them know when there is a sound to pay attention to. When there is a sound, like a timer ringing, the dog will run to touch the person and show them where the noise is coming from.



Many people who are deaf or hearing impaired use sign language to communicate. This is a language that uses the hands to form signals for words. It allows someone who can't hear to see what is being said. Sign language is fun to learn and will give you a way to talk to someone who can't hear your words.



This is Vegas. He is my friend, and he is deaf too. Vegas knows some sign language and he watches people's hands very carefully to know what they're saying to him. He especially likes the signs that mean it's time for a walk or for yummy treats!

If you want to learn some sign language, move your fingers and hand to make them look like the drawings below. Each letter of my name, Vinny, has a different sign.

Once you learn to spell my name in sign language, you can use my name sign. This is a shortened sign so you don't have to spell my whole name each time. My name sign is the letter V shown below held up and tapped two times against your cheek.

