Personal FM Systems

Many students cope effectively in quiet environments, but have a difficult time following information in large classrooms where the teacher’s voice is competing with background noise, reverberation, poor room acoustics, echo and distance. Therefore, the important speech signal is degraded.

WHAT IS AN F.M. (FREQUENCY MODULATED) SYSTEM?

An FM system is a wireless, portable, battery operated device, which looks similar to a walkman. It uses radio transmission to send auditory signals from a microphone to a receiver. The microphone and transmitter is worn by the teacher, and the receiver is worn by the student with light-weight earphones.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF F.M. SYSTEMS?

By providing more direct sound transmission from the teacher to the student, the effects of competing background noise, distance etc. are reduced. Thus, in poor listening conditions, the FM system improves the quality of the sound reaching the student.

Personal FM systems with rechargeable batteries may be purchased through the UQ Audiology Department. It is important to investigate with your Private Health Care Provider as there may be a substantial rebate available under “Hearing Devices”. The cost includes a fitting appointment with an Audiologist and testing of your child to show the benefit achieved.

FM Standard Options:
Phonak Classic or Phoenix: No major difference just one may be compatible with other FM systems used in the class (i.e. if there is a child with a hearing loss in the class) (Phonak) and the other is designed so that no other FM signals will interfere with the sound source and is thus not compatible with other FM systems within the school (Phoenix). Phonak option is slightly smaller and neck worn usually. COST: $1200

FM Premium Options:
Phonak Advanced Option: Has advanced technology to adjust the level of the speech signal in the child's receiver in response to high levels of ambient noise. Use with special headphones or wireless ear pieces (they look like small hearing aids) for cosmetics. It also has a faster charging time. COST: $2000 (non-wireless) or $2750 for 2 ears (wireless).

For more information and appointments, contact the UQ Health & Rehabilitation Clinics on 3365 2232 or email healthclinics@uq.edu.au