

HEARING LOSS

What you should know
and how you can treat it



1 in 10
Americans
suffers from
hearing
loss

65%
of people
with hearing loss
are below
retirement age

A problem that affects nearly all Americans

Did you know hearing loss affects one in every ten Americans? Those figures climb to one in three for people over 65. The good news is that today, with the latest advances in technology, most forms of hearing loss can be successfully treated.

This brochure will help you understand how a hearing problem can cause problems in other areas of life. It explains the different types of hearing loss and the many treatment options available. Starkey Laboratories, Inc., a world leader and pioneer in the hearing industry, created this handy reference guide for you. We're on a mission so the world may hear!



Hearing loss is more common than you think

Did you know:

- Approximately 31 million Americans have some degree of hearing loss, ranging from mild to severe.
- 10 million Americans have suffered irreversible noise induced hearing loss.
- 30 million more are exposed to dangerous noise levels each day.
- Only one out of five people who could benefit from a hearing aid actually wears one.

What to expect with untreated hearing loss

Hearing loss can interfere with all aspects of your life and your ability to process information.

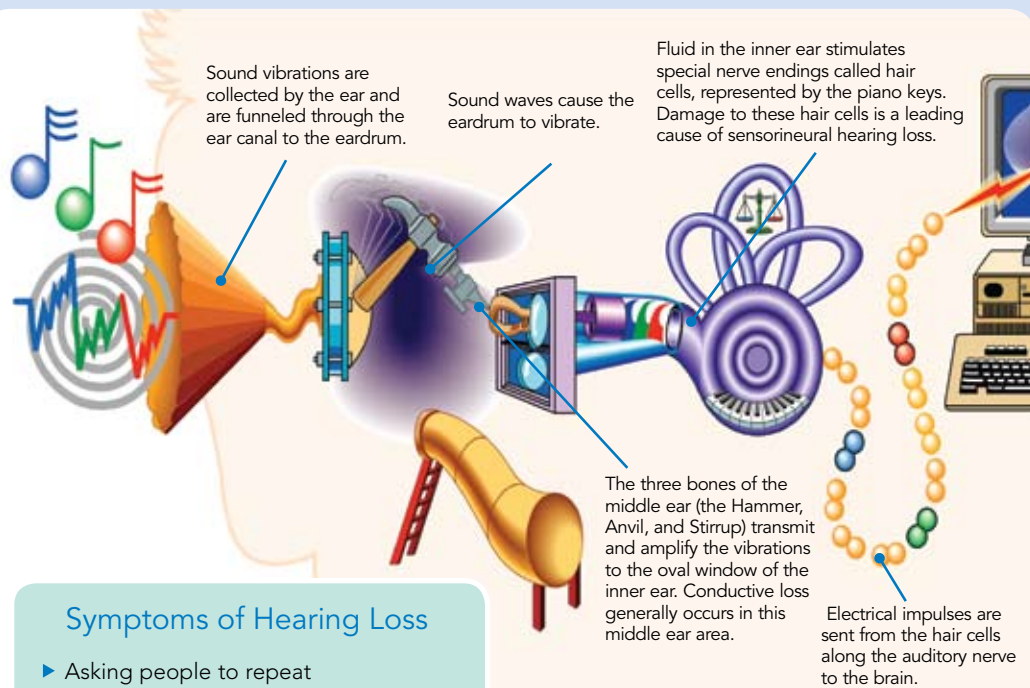
- Studies show children with hearing fall behind in school and are slower to develop speech and to learn to read.
- Even a slight hearing loss can have a negative impact on your ability to learn, socialize and enjoy life.
- Untreated patients are less likely to go out to crowded restaurants, miss important information in meetings and make frequent – often embarrassing – errors at work.
- As the problem grows worse, friends often avoid talking to people with hearing loss because of the strain.

For all of these reasons, it's critical to get help.

How hearing loss happens

Hearing loss tends to occur slowly, over a period of years. Because of this, many people aren't even aware of the problem until others point it out.

When you lose hearing, it often sounds like others are mumbling. It's like reading a book with every other page missing. You try to guess what you missed but most of the time you guess incorrectly. No wonder people with hearing loss become frustrated.



Symptoms of Hearing Loss

- ▶ Asking people to repeat
- ▶ Strained personal relationships – denial
- ▶ Misunderstanding conversations
- ▶ Social withdrawal
- ▶ Fatigue and stress
- ▶ Difficulty understanding children
- ▶ Turning up the volume on the TV

There's more than one type of hearing loss

Only a licensed hearing professional will be able to tell you which type of hearing loss you have and how severe it is. The most common forms of hearing loss are:

Conductive hearing loss:

Sound isn't conducted properly from the outer or middle ear to the inner ear.

Sensorineural hearing loss:

The inner ear is unable to properly transmit sound to the brain. The hair cells inside the inner ear (especially those for high-frequency hearing) have withered due to age, noise or medications and no longer pick up sounds properly.

Mixed loss:

This is a combination of a conductive loss and a sensorineural loss.



Could someone you know benefit from a hearing evaluation? Take this simple test

Yes **No** 1. You can hear, but you can't understand. Among the first sounds that "disappear" are those that are most high-pitched.

These include:

- Women's and children's voices
- Bird songs
- Confusion among sounds of words such as "dime," "time," "bake," "take"

Yes **No** 2. Do you have difficulty understanding what is being said, unless you are directly facing the speaker?

Yes **No** 3. Do you find yourself complaining that people are mumbling or slurring their words?

Yes **No** 4. Are you continually asking people to repeat words or phrases, though they feel they're speaking loud enough?

Yes **No** 5. Do you prefer the TV or radio louder than others do?



Yes **No** 6. Do you have difficulty understanding conversations within a group of people?

Yes **No** 7. Do you avoid group meetings, social occasions, public facilities or family gatherings where listening may be difficult?

Yes **No** 8. Do you have trouble hearing at the movies, house of worship, concert halls or at other public gatherings—especially where sound sources are at a distance?

Yes **No** 9. Do you have ringing in the ears or other head noises (hissing, buzzing, crickets, etc.)? Tinnitus (ringing) often accompanies hearing loss, but not always, and as such, may be the ear's way of saying, "Ouch!"

If you answered "yes" to at least two of these questions, you may have hearing loss and need to have your ears tested.

How to help someone you care about

Without realizing it, you may be making it easier for someone not to seek help. Repeating yourself or translating what others are saying may prevent your loved one from realizing how much communication they fail to understand or miss completely.

Here are some positive steps you can take to help them find the help they need:

- Talk to your friend about their hearing
- Inform them of the latest advancements in hearing aid technology. Today's hearing instruments are smaller and more powerful than ever before. Many automatically adjust to a specific type of hearing loss and adapt to different listening environments.
- Tell them about your experience with your hearing professional
- Let them know better hearing is just a phone call away

Hearing clearly again will have a positive impact on everyone's life, opening doors to new experiences and relationships. Don't put it off any longer.

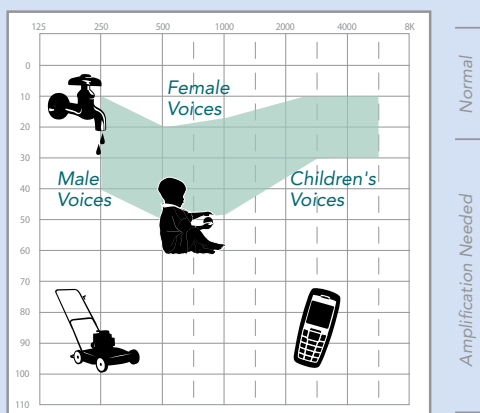
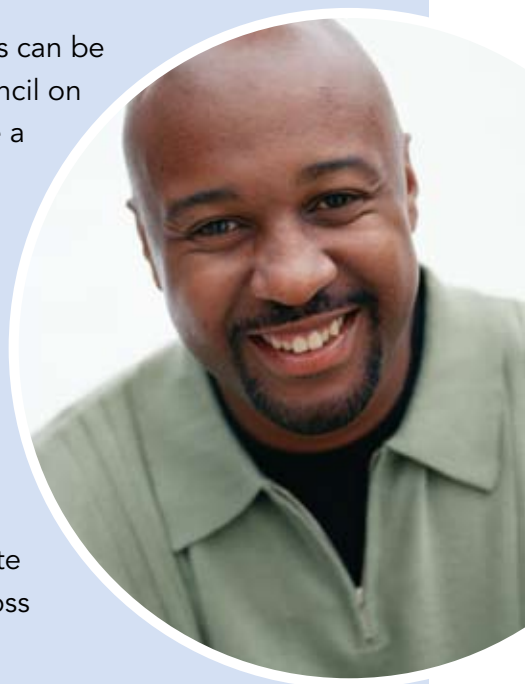
The following are recommended web resources for more information on hearing loss:

- www.starkey.com (Starkey Hearing Aids)
- www.betterhearing.org (Better Hearing Institute)
- www.healthyhearing.com (Healthy Hearing)
- www.audiology.org (American Academy of Audiology)

How a hearing professional can help

Early diagnosis and treatment of hearing loss can be life changing. Research by the National Council on Aging shows hearing aids don't just improve a person's ability to hear, they have a positive effect on the overall quality of life, raising an individual's social, emotional and physical sense of well-being.

It all starts with a hearing evaluation. A hearing healthcare professional will create an audiogram of how you hear. This charts the type and degree of your hearing loss and it will determine if you're a candidate for hearing aids, or have a form of hearing loss that is medically or surgically correctable.



People often permanently lose their hearing in only a portion of the pitch range. For example, many individuals first lose their ability to hear high-frequency sounds like 's,' 'sh,' and 'ch,' or children's and female voices. Fortunately, new digital hearing aid technology can be tuned to correct this problem

What to expect from your visit to a hearing professional:

1. Hearing analysis

Your hearing professional will perform a visual examination of your ear canal, evaluate your current hearing abilities and determine the type of hearing loss you may have.

2. Lifestyle discussion

They'll ask about the types of sound environments you frequent, which will help them understand the level of technology best suited for your lifestyle.

3. Budget discussion

They will help you narrow down your choice of hearing instruments based on the investment you are comfortable making.

4. Hearing aid options

They will show you the hearing aids that are best suited for your hearing loss type and lifestyle



How hearing aids work

Today's hearing aids are smaller and more sophisticated than anyone could have imagined just a few short years ago. Yet the basic principles that make hearing aids work are simple:

- **Acoustic sound waves enter a microphone and are turned into electrical signals**
- **An amplifier increases the electrical signal**
- **The amplified electrical signal is transformed back into an acoustic signal by a receiver**
- **The sound is channeled into the ear canal**

A tiny battery powers the hearing aid and user controls enable the wearer to adjust the volume, microphone settings, preprogrammed memory and more.

Hearing breakthroughs that are changing lives

Most hearing aids today are digital models that can be programmed to meet your specific needs in different hearing environments. They're designed to reduce background noise, deliver more natural sound and virtually eliminate "whistling" and "buzzing" – common complaints with older technology.

Best of all, today's hearing aids are so small and discreet, they're almost invisible. The only thing your friends and family will notice is how well you're hearing.

Hearing Instrument Styles



COMPLETELY-IN-CANAL (CIC)

- Virtually invisible
- For mild to moderately severe hearing loss
- Custom-made for you



IN-THE-CANAL (ITC)

- Less visible
- For mild to mildly severe hearing loss
- Variety of technology level choices that previously required a larger aid
- Custom-made for you



IN-THE-EAR (ITE)

- Easy to adjust
- For mild to severe hearing loss
- Custom-made for you



RECEIVER-IN-CANAL (RIC)

- Comfortable open fit
- Sleek design barely visible when worn
- For mild to moderate hearing loss



BEHIND-THE-EAR (BTE)

- Easiest to adjust
- Recommended for many types of hearing loss and ages
- Attaches to earbud or custom earmold



MINI BEHIND-THE-EAR

- Smallest BTE model
- Available with thin tubing and tiny earbud for ultimate discretion
- Appropriate for most types of hearing loss and ages

FIVE STEPS

to better hearing with hearing aids

1. Admit your hearing isn't what it used to be.

Most people wait five to seven years before solving their hearing problem. That's five to seven years that you're missing out on.

2. Keep a positive attitude while you seek help.

Much of your success with hearing aids will depend on your attitude, your desire to learn, and your determination to increase your ability to hear. A positive attitude is crucial to improved hearing.

3. Learn all you can about your hearing problem.

The best remedy for hearing loss is education. Do your homework and work with your hearing professional to determine the best solution for you.

4. Set realistic expectations.

Your hearing can improve significantly, but you will not hear again like you once did with normal hearing. Hearing instruments will restore a level of hearing. You'll be able to hear better, but not perfectly.

5. Practice, time and patience.

The transition to hearing aids requires practice. It's an investment that usually begins to pay dividends within 45 days. The more you wear your hearing aids, the better your experience will be.

Balanced hearing is better hearing

Even with all the technology breakthroughs in hearing aids, one ear simply cannot do the work of two. Hearing with both ears is far more effective, helping your brain recognize sounds and distinguish individual strands of speech in a noisy room. In addition, it's much easier to tell where a sound is coming from – and turn to it appropriately – if you hear it in stereo, as nature intended.

Hearing with both ears is also far more comfortable. People who wear two hearing aids report a richer, fuller, more natural sound quality. With two ears working together, less amplification is needed to hear everyday sounds. And lower volume means less distracting background noise.

Take the first step toward better hearing

If you or someone you care about is having trouble hearing, schedule an appointment for a hearing evaluation today.

To find a hearing professional near you, visit [starkey.com](https://www.starkey.com)

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