



Why is it better to treat hearing loss sooner rather than later?

Identifying and addressing hearing loss early brings many benefits. From enhancing your quality of life, to helping protect against several health consequences linked to unaddressed hearing loss, such as an increased risk of developing dementia, auditory deprivation, and reduced environmental awareness.

We “hear” with our brain, not with our ears. When we have a hearing loss, the connections in the brain that respond to sound become reorganized. Unaddressed hearing loss not only affects the listener’s ability to “hear” the sound accurately, but it also affects higher-level cognitive functioning. You need to put in so much effort just to perceive and understand what is being said that resources are diverted away from storing what you have heard into your memory.

Older adults with hearing loss are more likely to develop problems thinking and remembering than older adults whose hearing is normal.

A Johns Hopkins study found that older adults with hearing loss were 57 percent more likely to have deep episodes of stress, depression or bad mood than their peers with normal hearing. Another study showed that hearing loss is associated with an increased risk of depression in adults of all ages, but is most pronounced in 18 to 69 year olds.

Hearing loss affects more than speech

Safety: Hearing is the sense that identifies movement, sound, and danger in our environment as a first alert.

Balance: Hearing helps keep our body in balance, giving reference to the area around us.

Brain Health: With hearing loss, the auditory cortex of the brain atrophies due to limited information. The brain then uses other resources to compensate, affecting memory, balance, and enjoyment of social activities. Hearing loss is a leading contributor to the risk of dementia and Alzheimer's.

Other side effects: Hearing loss increases the risk of depression, fatigue due to the extra effort it takes to hear, anxiety, and negatively affects relationships and earning potential.

Auditory deprivation: When hearing loss is ignored and left untreated, the auditory system is deprived of sound. Depriving the auditory system of sound results in atrophy of the auditory nerves and speech processing areas of the brain.

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