

If you are one of the 32 million Americans with hearing loss, here's what you are missing.

While the average age of a first-time hearing aid wearer is 70 years old, nearly half of all people with hearing loss are below the age of 55. In other words, most of those with hearing difficulties wait 15 years or more before they act.

Why is this important? Because to delay the decision to seek treatment is to be unaware of the impact hearing loss has on your life as well as the lives of your family, friends and others.

Many with hearing problems are well-aware that their hearing has deteriorated, yet they delay a hearing aid purchase with a number of excuses: "My hearing loss isn't bad enough yet." "Those things are just for old people." Or, "I can get by without them." This is unfortunate because, since hearing loss is gradual, they do not realize how much their quality of life may have deteriorated.

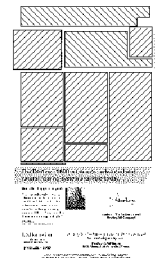
The consequences of hearing loss

It's very easy to forget how important hearing is to our quality of life. After all, we live in a visually oriented society, so hearing often plays a secondary role. But ignoring a hearing problem can negatively impact your life in several critical ways:

- Embarrassment and avoidance of social activities
- Fatigue, irritability and stress
- Negativity and depression
- Danger to personal safety
- Loneliness and rejection by others
- Impaired memory
- Reduced overall psychological health

For those who are still in the workforce, there are additional consequences:

- Less adaptability to learning new tasks
- Reduced earning power



- Reduced opportunity for promotion
- Less overall job effectiveness

Specific examples of the importance of hearing well in everyday life include the grandfather whose family thought he was senile, instead of just hearing impaired, because of inappropriate responses in conversation. Or the executive who lost a key piece of business because he misheard the client's needs. Many hearing professionals also know of children who are misdiagnosed as with learning disabilities, hyperactive or having short attention spans when in fact they had difficulty hearing.

There is no doubt that the inability to hear well will negatively affect your communication skills. Yet today 32 million Americans today experience hearing loss and nearly 80% of them do not seek help. Imagine if 80% of those with poor eyesight did not receive treatment!

The benefits of hearing aids

Today's sophisticated, technologically advanced hearing aids are a vast improvement over those available even a few years ago. Most are digital, "miniature computers" that have essentially eliminated "whistling" and "buzzing," provide a more "natural" sound, can automatically adjust from one hearing environment to the next, and can be programmed to help you hear in the places where you spend the most time.

Even more impressive than the technical advances are the ways a hearing aid can improve your quality of life:

- Increased self-esteem
- More social activity
- Increased emotional stability
- Greater feeling of control over your life
- Greater earning power
- Improved interpersonal relationships

- **Reduced anger, frustration, depression and anxiety**

If you (or a spouse or loved one) has mild, moderate or severe hearing loss, consider all the benefits listed above and you'll quickly see how hearing treatment can have a positive impact on many, many lives.

Even the social stigma is going away

Lots of people with hearing loss are concerned that they will look old or "handicapped" to others. But think for a moment how common it is today to see someone with earphones connected to a hands-free cell phone, music player, or a personal data device. Society is now more "plugged-in" than ever before, and this phenomenon will only increase in the future.

It's also important to know that others will be much less aware of a hearing aid than you will be, and that misinterpreting words, responding inappropriately and being left out of conversations are much more obvious than a hearing aid. Because of digital technology, most hearing instruments today are very discreet, and many are virtually invisible to the average person.

Call a hearing professional today for an appointment

It simply cannot be overstated: Seeking early treatment for hearing loss has the potential to change your life. Both for you and the significant people in your life.

Simply contact a hearing professional who understands today's technology to schedule an evaluation, consultation and hearing test. Many offer this at no charge. If you do in fact need a hearing aid, your hearing professional will be able to discuss which of today's wide range of models is best suited for your needs. Don't delay. The sooner you act, the sooner you can improve communication with those around you and fully experience what life has to offer.

**All statistics from [Better Hearing Institute \(betterhearing.org\)](http://betterhearing.org) and [Starkey Laboratories \(starkey.com\)](http://starkey.com).*



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