

The True Cost of Hearing Loss

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According to a recent national survey by the Better Hearing Institute more than 31 million Americans admit to a hearing loss. Of these only 37% are at retirement age. The majority are either school age or in the work force. It is estimated that only 23% of hearing impaired Americans are being helped with hearing instruments, which are the necessary treatment for 90-95% of people with hearing loss. What most folks don't realize is how the cost of untreated hearing impairment can affect us socially and fiscally.

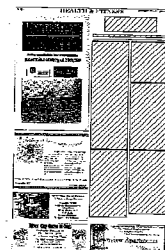
No matter what your age, the following social, mental, and physical effects of untreated hearing loss have been reported and documented:

- Poor communication in relationships
- Decrease in spontaneity and intimacy
- Increased dependency on others to hear for you
- Decrease in humor and sharing
- Increased arguments over the volume of the TV, or simply not listening
- Anxiety levels
- Increase in blood pressure
- Difficulty sleeping

- Changes in heart rate
- Upset stomach and ulcers
- Frequency of group social participation
- Withdrawal from group activities once enjoyed
- Depression
- Less satisfaction with life
- Self-criticism
- Decreased self-esteem
- Lower income levels*
- Anger and frustration
- Anger at others for not trying harder
- Frustration at not being able to understand
- Pretending to hear what has been said
- Anxiety from fear of appearing stupid and making mistakes

Most of the time, folks are aware that their hearing has deteriorated but are reluctant to seek help. Perhaps they don't want to acknowledge the problem, are embarrassed by what they see as a weakness, or believe that they can "get by" without using a hearing aid. And, unfortunately, too many folks wait years, even decades, before getting treatment.

Your children might think of hearing loss as something that happens mainly to older adults; but most folks with measurable



hearing loss are in the prime of life. Approximately 1 out of 6 baby boomers (ages 41-59) and 1 out of 14 "Gen-Xers" (ages 29-40) have some degree of hearing loss; while only 1 out of 4 of all hearing impaired persons choose to get treatment. As concerned parents of adult children with children of their own, it may be time to let your kids know that getting hearing aids at a younger age reduces their chances of lost income.

Most folks, both young and young at heart, are still embarrassed to admit they have hearing problems and get hearing aids. Some incorrectly believe a hearing aid will make them seem odd or out of place or less capable than their co-workers or friends. The truth is folks draw

more attention by appearing vague or out of touch because they aren't hearing very well, then when they wear a discreet hearing device fitted to their ear. It is important for hearing impaired folks of all ages to realize that inattention and lack of confidence in your ability to communicate effectively can really hurt your career and reduce your income potential in today's competitive marketplace. In a service economy, good communications skills are critically important for everyone.

For more information you may reach Teri at River City Audiology & Hearing Aid Centers, 309-693-2717 or toll free 1-877-461-HEAR

