

MONEY MATTERS



Hearing Loss May Mean Income Loss

(NAPS)—Maybe you haven't heard, but good hearing may mean a larger paycheck. New research indicates that there may be a relationship between your hearing and your income.

A survey by the Better Hearing Institute shows that working Americans who ignore their hearing problems are collectively losing at least \$100 billion a year in earnings. Even people with mild hearing loss, who may miss a consonant here or a word there, may lose income if they can't completely grasp the latest news at the water cooler or a phone message from the boss.

The average amount of income lost by working people who don't get hearing aids ranges from \$1,000 a year—for those with mild hearing loss—to \$12,000 a year for those with profound hearing loss.

However, on average, the income decline due to hearing loss can be cut in half by wearing a hearing aid, the research revealed.

Getting a hearing aid at a younger age may also help reduce the chance of losing income. Many think of hearing loss as something that happens mainly to older people. However, most people with this problem are in the prime of life, including one out of six baby boomers (ages 41-59) and one out of 14 "Gen Xers" (ages 29-40). Yet only one out of four Americans with hearing problems are getting treatment.

Many people are embarrassed



Most people with hearing loss are still in the workforce.

to admit they have hearing problems and might need hearing aids, experts say. Some incorrectly think a hearing aid will make them seem odd or less able to do the job than their co-workers.

"If you seem out of touch because you can't hear very well, you will be much more noticeable than you would be with a modern hearing device in your ear," says Dr. Sergei Kochkin, the Better Hearing Institute's executive director.

In the workplace, he points out, good communication skills are essential, particularly when it comes to understanding what customers and co-workers want.

Other research shows that untreated hearing problems disrupt family life, hamper emotional intimacy and increase the chances of psychological problems.

To learn more about ways to treat hearing loss, call (800) EARWELL or visit www.betterhearing.org.