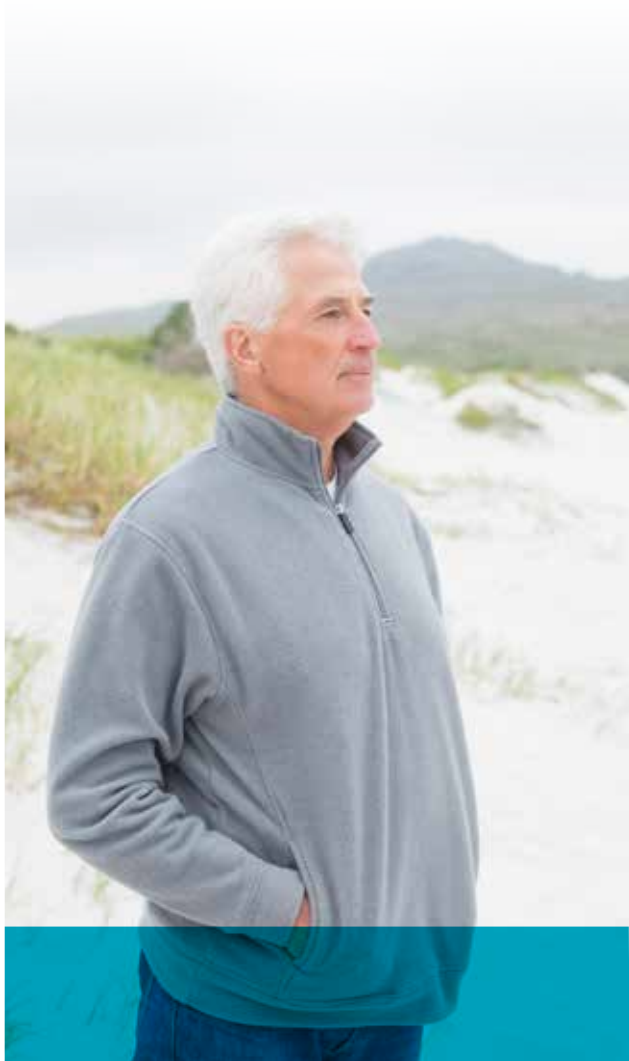


Confusion & Hearing Loss

There may be a link.



Effects of untreated hearing loss

Hearing loss isn't just an ear issue; it's a quality of life and health issue. Untreated hearing loss can have serious and wide-ranging consequences²:

- ↘ Increased mental fatigue/stress
- ↘ Poorer memory
- ↘ Difficulty focusing
- ↘ Poorer mental health
- ↘ Social withdrawal
- ↘ Depression

Hearing aids can lessen the cognitive load on your brain as well as help improve feelings of isolation and depression.

Note: Consult your healthcare professional if you notice signs listed above in yourself or someone you love.

Hearing loss impacts more than you think

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Growing evidence indicates that older adults with hearing loss are more likely to experience the symptoms of cognitive decline. Hearing aids can improve the negative effects of hearing loss on the brain.

A Johns Hopkins Study found that cognitive diminishment was 41 percent greater in seniors with hearing loss!



Your hearing and your brain

Think of hearing as a partnership between your ears and your brain. When someone speaks, your brain processes the sounds so that you can understand them. That's called cognitive load.

When you have untreated hearing loss, the speech signals coming in to your brain are degraded, so your brain has to work much harder to process them. When more brain resources are used for understanding sounds, other brain tasks such as memory and comprehension can suffer.

Use it or lose it

Audiologists recognize a significant benefit of early intervention with hearing aids. When you lose hearing ability over time, your brain can actually “forget” how to hear certain sounds. For example, the longer your brain is deprived of high-frequency sounds, the harder it will be to process those sounds even after being fitted with hearing aids.

What can you do?

If you suspect cognitive or emotional problems, schedule both a hearing evaluation with a trained professional and a physical exam with your doctor.

¹*Journal of the Medical Association Internal Medicine, Jan. 2013;*

²*Hearing Review, Sept. 2012;*

³betterhearing.org



Hearing aids can help

Hearing aids process sound signals so it's easier for your brain to understand them. They also reduce the cognitive load, making it easier for your brain to perform other tasks. Benefits of wearing hearing aids may include³:

- Reduced mental fatigue
- Decreased feelings of isolation and depression
- Improved ability to do several things at once
- Improved memory, attention and focus
- Improved communication skills

For more information about how hearing impacts cognition, talk to your hearing healthcare professional.



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