

Understanding Hearing Loss

What causes hearing loss
and how it can affect you.



One in five Americans has hearing loss



Hearing loss is one of the most common health issues in the world. Veterans are 30 percent more likely to have severe hearing loss than non-veterans.¹

There are many reasons for the high volume of cases, with a longer-living population high on the list. Called presbycusis, age-related hearing loss is the slow loss of hearing that occurs as people get older.

Main causes of hearing loss:²

- Natural aging process
- Excessive noise (*e.g. explosions, aircraft carriers, artillery, and naval ship engine rooms*)
- Injuries to the head or ear
- Infections
- Variety of diseases
- Birth defects
- Genetics
- Ototoxic reaction to drugs or cancer treatment

Are you one of them?

Do you:

- Ask others to repeat themselves?
- Turn up the television or radio volume to levels others find too loud?
- Have trouble understanding conversation in noisy places?
- Have trouble hearing women's and children's voices?
- Have trouble hearing over the telephone?
- Have difficulty following a fast-moving conversation?

If you answered yes to two or more of these questions, a full consultation from a clinician is recommended.

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There are two types of hearing loss...

While the causes of hearing loss may be varied, there are only two types of hearing loss:

Conductive — A problem with the outer or middle ear, conductive hearing loss is often medically or surgically treatable. A common example is chronic middle ear infection.

Sensorineural — The most common type, sensorineural hearing loss, is a problem with the inner ear or the hearing nerve, usually permanent, and can be rehabilitated with amplification through hearing aids.

Mixed hearing loss is a combination of conductive and sensorineural hearing loss.

...with numerous negative effects

Many people put off getting help for their hearing loss because they think it's insignificant — something they can deal with by simply turning the TV louder or asking friends to repeat themselves. But research has linked untreated hearing loss to significant issues such as:³

- Irritability, negativism and anger
- Fatigue, tension, stress and depression
- Avoidance or withdrawal from social situations
- Social rejection and loneliness
- Reduced alertness and increased risk to personal safety
- Impaired memory and ability to learn new tasks
- Reduced job performance and earning power
- Diminished psychological and overall health

For more details on how we hear, talk to your clinician.

Sources:

¹Groenewold, M. (2010). Annual social economic supplement to the current population survey hearing loss. Retrieved from: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6028a4.htm>

²Puntillo, T. (n. d.). Hearing loss and tinnitus, the most common disability for veterans. Military Connection. Retrieved from: <http://www.militaryconnection.com/veterans-scene/veterans-hearing-loss-disability>

³"Consequences of Hearing Loss." Untreated Hearing Loss Effects. Better Hearing Institute, n.d. Web. 30 Mar. 2017.

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