

Facts About Hearing Loss

Approximately 37.5 million Americans suffer from hearing loss.ⁱ

Hearing loss affects people of all ages—one in eight people over 12 years of age in the United States has significant hearing loss.ⁱⁱ Hearing loss is the third most common health problem in the United States. Untreated hearing loss can affect your ability to understand speech and can negatively impact your social and emotional well-being—hearing impairment can decrease your quality of life!

Signs you may have a hearing loss:

- Difficulty hearing people in noisy environments such as a restaurant, shopping mall, in cars, or at the movie theater.
- People seem to “mumble” all the time.
- Family, friends, or colleagues often need to repeat themselves when speaking with you.
- You have trouble hearing people when they are not facing you or are in another room.
- You have trouble following conversations.
- You have ringing, buzzing, or hissing sounds in your ears.

What causes hearing loss?

- Exposure to excessive loud noise.
- Ear infections, trauma, or ear disease.
- Damage to the inner ear and ear drum from contact with a foreign object (cotton swabs, bobby pins, etc.).
- Illness or certain medications.
- Deteriorating hearing due family history, noise exposure, or age.

How to protect your hearing:

- Wear hearing protection when around loud sounds. There are different types of hearing protection such as foam earplugs, earmuffs and custom hearing protection devices. Contact your local audiologist for custom hearing protection devices.
- Turn down the volume when listening to the radio, the TV, MP3 player, or anything through ear buds and headphones.
- Walk away from the noise.
- And, other than hearing protection, do not put anything in your ear!

ⁱ Blackwell DL, Lucas JW, Clarke TC. Summary health statistics for U.S. adults: National health interview survey, 2012 (PDF). National Center for Health Statistics. Vital Health Stat 10(260). 2014.

ⁱⁱ Lin FR, Niparko JK, Ferrucci L. Hearing loss prevalence in the United States. Arch Intern Med. 2011 Nov 14; 171(20): 1851-1852.