

How do I know if I need a **Hearing Test?**

Hearing loss is a different journey for everyone, no matter the cause or speed of progression. Most will experience a gradual hearing loss over time, but how do you know when to seek medical advice?

Hearing Loss and Aging

Many people will experience at least some gradual decline in hearing as they age. While the rate and shape of hearing loss varies, it most often occurs in the high frequency range. This can cause people to hear what others are saying, but not understand what they have actually said. It can also make others sound as if they are mumbling, even if they are not. Hearing loss can also happen in the low frequencies, which can impact vowel sounds.

Impacts on Daily Life

As hearing loss progresses, some will find themselves withdrawing from activities they used to enjoy. Many have reported that they stop going out to eat with groups of friends due to having difficulty following the conversation, particularly when there is background noise. Withdrawing from social situations can have a negative effect on overall health and cognition. Hearing aids not only help your ability to hear, but can also improve your ability to hear in background noise. The goal of any amplification is to help you communicate well and enjoy activities you find most important.

Impacts on Overall Health and Cognition

Hearing loss has also been shown to be associated with cognitive decline. There are many factors that contribute to changes in cognition, but hearing loss is one of the few contributors that you can actually do something about.

For more information about hearing loss and dementia, check out the **Lancet 2023** article titled “Association between hearing aid use and all-cause and cause-specific dementia: An analysis of the UK biobank cohort.”

When to Get Your Hearing Checked

If you are noticing that you may not be hearing others in general conversation, you are having difficulty in background noise, or you are not hearing environmental sounds, such as crickets or alarms, it is time to get your hearing tested. Even if you do not end up having hearing loss, it is always nice to have a baseline in the event that your hearing does decline. If you ever experience sudden or rapid hearing loss in one or both ears, call immediately, as it may be due to a condition that needs to be treated urgently.