A Lot to Lose: The Potential Impact of Untreated Hearing Loss

You’re in control when you know the facts
by Oticon (Paid Content) | Comments: 0

If you’re among the many who suffer from hearing loss, you may be losing more than you think. One recent study found that individuals with untreated hearing loss face an increased risk of accelerated cognitive decline.

People with hearing loss who don’t use hearing aids spend less time participating in social activities, the study determined. But being socially active with friends and family can be critical to maintaining mental fitness as you age. When you avoid social because of your hearing loss, your brain’s need for a regular stimulus, and in turn reduces their risk of accelerated cognitive decline.

Further research supports these findings and highlights other potential consequences of untreated hearing loss. It can, for example, increase the risk of mood disorders like depression and anxiety and lead to frustration among friends and acquaintances. The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine has called untreated hearing loss “a significant public health concern.” Hearing, NASM reports, is “vital to communication, health, functions, and quality of life.”

The Benefits of Hearing Aids

The good news for anyone with hearing loss is that all of those things stated above are possible to avoid with today’s hearing aids and technologies. Scientists have found that people who treat their hearing loss with hearing aids are able to communicate better, see improvements in mood, and are less likely to withdraw from social activities — which in turn reduces their risk of accelerated cognitive decline.

So how can you know if you’re a candidate for hearing aids? You can begin by asking yourself a few basic screening questions:

- Do you find that people sound mumbled or speak low?
- Do you find it hard to follow conversations in large gatherings or when there is background noise?
- Do you have trouble hearing phone conversations or need to turn up the volume on the radio or TV?
- Do you often tell family and friends to repeat themselves?
- Do you need to talk directly to people to understand what they’re saying?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, or if you’re hearing trouble in other situations, then it’s important to get a professional hearing evaluation. Talk to your doctor about your options—and don’t let your hearing loss take anything away.

You have the power to improve your hearing so you can live a fuller life. See how Oticon’s new technology can help you on a level you’ve never heard before.

Take the first step to improving your hearing today.
Click here to try an Oticon hearing aid risk-free.

Also of Interest

- Listen Up: 7 Hearing Facts for Anyone Over 56

Sources:
1 Oticon, Oticon, National Institutes of Health

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Listen Up: 7 Hearing Facts for Anyone Over 50

It’s not all bad news — but does require you to take action

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If you’re over 50 and have difficulty hearing, you can rest assured that you’re not alone. Increasing age is the biggest risk factor for hearing loss, and age-related hearing loss is “premature”, as Dr. Kenneth Way of the University of Michigan, notes in an interview with AARP.

1. Age-related hearing loss is different than outer/inner/and/or middle ear hearing loss.

While the latter is typically caused by exposure to loud sounds, the former usually results from natural changes to the ear over time. Noise-induced hearing loss is preventable (wear ear protectors while mowing, for example), but as we age, the changes mean we are not alone, and there is nothing we can do to prevent age-related hearing loss.

2. Many adults experience hearing loss without realizing it.

Researchers estimate that 1 in 3 people older than 50 experience hearing loss that affects their quality of life. Most often, many of these who do have hearing loss don’t notice the signs until they are startled by a loud noise.

3. There’s a correlation between hearing loss and cognitive health.

Research funded by groups like the National Institute on Aging has found that untreated hearing loss can increase the risk of cognitive decline and dementia in older adults. A study found that those who had mild hearing loss were at greater risk of developing dementia. The findings were linked to the older adults’ hearing loss.

4. Untreated hearing loss can impact quality of life.

In addition to its potential impact on cognitive decline, untreated hearing loss has been found to increase the risk of mood disorders like depression and anxiety. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has noted that hearing loss “can have a profound impact on quality of life.”

5. Hearing aids can be life-changing.

The National Institute of Health estimates that nearly 50 million adults in the United States could benefit from using hearing aids. And one recent survey conducted by Oticon Inc. finds that 70% of adults with hearing loss found that 58% were able to hear “better” or “much better” with hearing aids.

6. Modern hearing aids are nothing like the devices your parents had in their ears.

Today’s hearing aids are comfortable, easy to use, and technologically advanced. The latest devices use digital technology for seamless connectivity with smartphones and other electronics, and automatically adjust to the wearer’s “sound environment” to optimize hearing in difficult situations.

7. It’s a qualified professional who helps you get your hearing back.

The first step to improving your hearing is to see a professional for a hearing test. The test will help you understand what you can do about it. It frequently seems like these audiologists are speaking in a code. But there are a few steps you can take to make the most of your hearing. For example, take your doctor’s advice about the professional evaluation.

The next step is to improve your hearing today. The first step is finding a qualified professional who can help you get your hearing back.

Click here to try an Oticon hearing aid-risk-free.

Also of Interest

- A List of the Present Impact of Tinnitus

Sources:

- American Family Physician
- National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders
- Today’s Geriatric Medicine
- National Institute on Aging
- National Library of Medicine
- National Institutes of Health
- Hearing University, a subsidiary of Oticon Inc. (www.hearinguniversity.com)