

Dr. Mimi's Audiology Clinic  
1900 Olympic Blvd. Suite 202  
Walnut Creek, CA 94596  
925-937-4455  
[YourHearingDoc.com](http://YourHearingDoc.com)

## THE PERSONAL IMPACT OF UNTREATED HEARING LOSS

One of the most commonly unaddressed health conditions in America today is hearing loss, which affects more than 34 million Americans, most of whom are below retirement age.

Hearing loss can strike at any time and at any age. If left unaddressed, hearing loss can affect virtually every aspect of an individual's life. Numerous studies, in fact, have linked untreated hearing loss to a wide range of physical and emotional problems, such as irritability, negativism, anger, fatigue, tension, stress, depression, avoidance or withdrawal from social situations, social rejection and loneliness, reduced alertness and increased risk to personal safety, impaired memory and inability to learn new tasks, reduced job performance and earning power, and diminished psychological and overall physical health.

Three in ten people over age **60** have hearing loss. In addition, among Americans between the ages 41 to **59**, about 15 percent already have hearing problems—that's one in six Baby Boomers. Or in younger people, 7.4 percent—or one in 14—Generation Xers, ages **29 to 40**, suffer from hearing loss. In fact, at least 1.4 million children, 18 or younger suffer from hearing

problems. Furthermore, it's estimated that **3 in 1,000** infants are born with serious to profound hearing loss.

Despite the numbers and the far-reaching impact hearing loss has on so many aspects of an individual's life, many people who are aware that their hearing has deteriorated are nevertheless reluctant to seek help. Unfortunately, too many wait years, even decades, before getting treatment and become more and more disconnected from the people around them as time goes by.

However, the fact is that with modern advances in technology, there are solutions for many. In fact, **90 to 95** percent of people with hearing loss *can* be helped with hearing aids and their quality of life will significantly improve.

## **Common Signs and Symptoms**

The signs of hearing loss can be subtle and emerge slowly, or they can be significant and come on suddenly. Either way, there are common indications.

### **Socially, individuals with hearing loss may:**

- require frequent repetition
- have difficulty following conversations involving more than two people
- think that other people sound muffled or mumble
- have difficulty hearing in noisy situations, like conferences, restaurants, malls, or crowded meeting rooms
- have trouble hearing children and women

- keep the TV or radio turned up to a high volume
- answer or respond inappropriately in conversations
- have ringing in their ears and/or
- read lips or more intently watch people's faces when in conversation

**Emotionally, individuals with hearing loss may:**

- feel stressed from straining to hear what others are saying
- feel annoyed at others because they can't hear or understand them
- feel embarrassed when meeting new people or after misunderstanding what others are saying
- feel nervous about trying to hear and understand and/or
- withdraw from social situations that they once enjoyed

**Medically, individuals with hearing loss may:**

- have a family history of hearing loss
- take medications that can harm the hearing system (ototoxic drugs)
- have diabetes, heart, circulation, or thyroid problems and/or
- have been exposed to very loud sounds over a long period or suffered a single exposure to explosive noise
- Will suffer cognitive decline, including short and long term memory loss
- People with mild to moderate hearing loss are 3 to 4 times more likely to fall

**Eye-Opening Facts about Hearing Loss**

- Approximately one in 10 Americans has some degree of hearing loss. It may reach 44 million by 2030.

- Only 15 percent of physicians today ask patients if they have any hearing problems.
- People with untreated hearing loss make, on average, up to \$23,000 less per year, depending on the degree of their hearing loss. Wearing hearing aids mitigates the loss in earnings about 50 percent.
- People with untreated hearing loss are more likely to report depression, anxiety, and paranoia and less likely to participate in organized activities, compared to those who wear hearing aids, according to a survey by the National Council on the Aging (NCOA) of 2,300 hearing-impaired adults, age 50 or older.
- Untreated mild to moderate hearing loss is associated with short-term memory loss, according to a Brandeis University study.
- Nine out of ten hearing aid users report improvements in their quality of life, according to a survey by the Better Hearing Institute of more than 2,300 consumers.

## **Seeking Help**

Hearing aids hold such great potential to positively change so many lives. Advances in digital technology have dramatically improved hearing aids, making them smaller than ever with far better sound quality. Nevertheless, only one in five people who could benefit from hearing devices currently wear them. The Better Hearing Institute & Dr. Mimi's Audiology Clinic encourage all people with a hearing loss to seek assistance from an Audiologist and to explore the options for improving their hearing and their lives.

**by Mimi T. Salamat, Ph.D., CCC-A, FAAA**  
Clinical Audiologist and Tinnitus Specialist  
Walnut Creek, CA

Dr. Mimi specializes in Hearing Loss and Tinnitus Management and is here to help! Visit us at [yourhearingdoc.com](http://yourhearingdoc.com).

*\* The above statistics were reported from the Better Hearing Institute (BHI), which was founded in 1973. The BHI conducts research and engages in hearing health education with the goal of helping people with hearing loss to benefit from proper treatment.*