

Hearing Loss: The Basics

Are you missing out on conversations or having problems hearing in various situations? You are not alone. There are many causes of hearing loss, with a direct link between aging and decreased hearing. In fact, [30 percent of adults between the ages of 65 and 74](#) experience some type of hearing loss, with the number affected increasing to 47 percent of those over the age of 75. As with many of our senses or biological processes, aging dulls our ability to hear as well as we could in our younger years. If you, or a loved one, is experiencing hearing loss, be sure that you know these basics.

When to seek help

Hearing loss is progressive, which means that it will only continue to get worse. If you find that you are unable to hear well in busy places, such as a restaurant, or if you are unable to catch the conversation while speaking on a telephone, it is time to seek professional help sooner than later.

Where to seek help

Start your hearing loss conversation with your geriatrician. Be honest and talk about when it is most difficult for you hear, and what is most difficult to hear during your normal day. Your geriatrician will assess you for any other complications and likely



refer you to an audiologist. Your audiologist will get to know your situation and preferences, test you and then make recommendations for adaptive equipment such as hearing aids.

All about hearing aids

You might be surprised to see that hearing aids are not what your parents wore. In fact, there are options that can suit your preference and lifestyle without breaking the bank. If hearing aids are your course of treatment, you will find that you can care for your hearing aids with just a few additions into your regular weekly routine. [Batteries typically last one and a half weeks](#), and cleaning your aids just requires a soft, dry cloth.

Resisting treatment

One of the most difficult parts of hearing loss is simply noticing it and wanting to seek help. If your loved one is struggling with accepting his hearing loss, or if he won't even entertain the idea

of talking to the doctor about it, don't be discouraged. Admitting hearing loss issues can be humbling and difficult. Work on a nice balance between being persistent about your concerns and seeming forceful about recommending treatment. Your loved one will appreciate your concerns more if you are able to express your worry without being too aggressive.

Benefits of hearing loss treatment

Once you or your loved one has been properly treated for hearing loss, you can be sure that your quality of life will increase. Untreated hearing loss can lead to depression, increased isolation, and low self-esteem. With the introduction of appropriate adaptive equipment, the person can return to the conversation.

Further, hearing loss in confused seniors can cause even more issues with aggressive or difficult behaviors. Imagine living with Alzheimer's Disease and untreated hearing loss; the combination leads to frustration and anxiety for the senior and those around her.

If your loved one lives far from you, or if you are wondering if there is a hearing loss issue, consider having a conversation with the [Visiting Angels caregiver](#) that works with your loved one. We see your loved one on a regular basis, have experience with working with those with hearing loss, and might notice a hearing deficit before you do. We want to work together with family members to give your loved one the best care possible.

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