

Now Hear This

Cherish Your Hearing For Life

by Jennifer Gehlen, Au.D.

(NAPSA)—One out of every six people lives with some degree of hearing loss, and the earlier you have your hearing evaluated and treated by a professional, the better your outcome. These facts and hints can help:

What Is Hearing Loss?

Experts have identified multiple potential causes of hearing loss, including aging, noise exposure, head or ear injuries, infections and chronic illnesses. If you experience any of these symptoms, have your hearing checked:

- Decreased attention
- Trouble communicating with others
- Irritability, stress, depression
- Withdrawal from social life
- Memory loss
- Reluctance to try new things or visit unfamiliar places
- Declining performance at work.

Other signs include needing to raise the volume on audio sources (especially if others complain the sound is already turned up too high), thinking that people are always mumbling or talking too softly, and frequently asking others to repeat themselves.

Addressing Hearing Loss Relieves Mental Exhaustion

Wherever there's a high level of ambient noise, holding a conversation requires concentration and effort. If you have unaddressed hearing loss, it can be downright exhausting. You cannot keep up with multiple conversations going on around you without exerting significant effort to listen and understand. Trying to actively participate eventually leaves you so weary you might start to avoid socializing altogether.

Rather than missing out, consider what hearing aids can do. Current models include technology that continuously monitors your listening environment and singles out the dominant speaker while reducing background noise. Some people find they can actually hear better than their companions with "normal" hearing in very loud surroundings.

Enjoy The Great Outdoors Again

Wind and other environmental sounds make it difficult to understand what others are saying outside. Hearing aids today can help you hear every word clearly by singling out speech while suppressing interference. Some devices use motion sensors from an iPhone to adjust their focus to a friend's voice, while still helping you hear sounds vital to safety, such as an oncoming car.

No More Echo

Sounds reflecting off hard surfaces



To enjoy the sounds of life for as long as possible, it's important to recognize any indications of hearing loss and address them immediately.

create reverberation—echoes that can interfere with understanding speech. Automatic programs can all but eliminate irritating echoes, delivering cleaner, clearer and easier-to-understand speech.

Enjoy Music

Modern hearing aids are expertly configured to enable enjoyment of music to the fullest whether you're listening to a concert, home stereo system or even onstage yourself. Hearing aids with high-definition music programs can deliver the ideal acoustic balance to your ears in each situation with quality and completeness.

Telephonophobia Or Hearing Loss?

In previous generations, hearing aid wearers didn't like using phones because their devices would emit a high-pitched whine when next to a phone receiver. Plus, older devices often failed to provide enough voice clarity to significantly improve phone conversations.

Advances in wireless connectivity options have all but eliminated this. Now you can stream phone calls directly into both ears, in stereo, using Bluetooth technology.

The Choice Is Yours

There's no "one size fits all" answer to hearing loss because every person is uniquely affected. Fortunately, a wide range of hearing aids is available that can be tailored to your individual degree of hearing loss, specific ear anatomy, and personal lifestyle.

Your first move upon acknowledging you might have hearing loss should be to contact a hearing care professional and arrange to have your hearing tested and formally diagnosed.

Learn More

For further facts on preventing hearing loss, go to www.signiausa.com.

• *Dr. Gehlen is an Educational Specialist at Signia. She provides training to customers and staff on company technology, products and software from face-to-face meetings to virtual sessions.*