

Preventing Hearing Loss In An Increasingly Loud World

Six Steps To Better Hearing

(NAPSA)—More than 28 million Americans have hearing loss, and a growing number of them are baby boomers. As a generation raised on rock 'n' roll and other loud noise, this ubiquitous group possesses a young state of mind, but is often in denial about growing older and the damage it has done to its hearing. Inevitably, the condition will worsen unless steps are taken to prevent further damage.

According to a recent Healthy Hearing survey of adults ages 50-70 conducted on behalf of Energizer hearing aid batteries, almost seven out of 10 respondents (67.1 percent) are concerned about experiencing hearing loss, but only 30 percent feel it's important enough to have their hearing checked. Furthermore, only 11.5 percent have had their hearing tested in the past year, making the other 88.5 percent overdue for a hearing screening.

Dr. Michael Valente, director of the Division of Adult Audiology at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, Mo., has years of experience dealing with people affected by this condition.

“Getting your hearing checked at an earlier age will put your mind at ease and help kick-start a healthier you,” Valente says. “One of the biggest misconceptions of hearing loss is that people wait until they are older to get their hearing tested, when in reality,



Getting your hearing tested once a year should be a priority.

they should start yearly checkups around age 40. Moreover, restricting the amount of loud noise in the environment by wearing earplugs can prevent hearing damage.”

It is inevitable in our world that we, or someone we love, will be affected by hearing loss. In fact, the survey also found that almost half of those surveyed (49.1 percent) are concerned their spouse is suffering from hearing loss. For those affected, learning how to communicate may require slight changes in communication, and Valente suggests the following six tips.

1. Be in the same room with the person to whom you are speaking, and position yourself face to face.

2. Don't raise your voice, because yelling or exaggerating words makes comprehension more difficult.

3. Turn off background noise,

because noise from a television or radio may interfere with conversation.

4. Use assisted hearing technology available (at no charge) at most entertainment venues.

5. Take advantage of technological advances. New technology is introduced every three months, and hearing aids are now digital and smaller than ever.

6. Choose the right batteries for your hearing aids and your specific needs. For example, Energizer offers hearing aid batteries in convenient perforated packaging, as well as the Energizer® EZ Change® hearing aid battery dispenser, which reduces the chance of dropping or fumbling the batteries.

If you or a loved one struggles with hearing loss, talk to your doctor or see an audiologist and get your hearing tested. People who have trouble seeing get their eyes examined, but for some reason, hearing damage does not have the same sense of urgency, because the effects of hearing loss are gradual and increase over time. Valente agrees that people need to make it a priority to get their hearing screened once a year, and take preventative measures to protect the hearing they have.

For more information on hearing loss and hearing aids, as well as the batteries that power them, visit www.energizer.com or www.audiology.org.