



# ASK YOUR DOCTOR

## Boomers Tackle Escalating Hearing Loss With Hip, High-Tech Hearing Aids

(NAPSA)—Now hear this: one in 10 Americans—almost 17 million under 65—suffer to some degree from hearing loss. Overexposure to excessive noise is to blame for nearly a third.

Everyday sounds louder than 80 decibels can be harmful to your hearing. Some common hazards include: loud rock concerts, car stereos, jet plane takeoff, lawnmowers, truck traffic, subway noises and many others. These loud environmental noises that multiply each year, have caused more baby boomers to suffer from hearing loss than any preceding generation.

Common hearing loss signs include:

- Asking people to repeat themselves frequently
- Feeling like others are mumbling much of the time
- Experiencing difficulty distinguishing voices from background noise
- Avoiding crowded places because it is hard to hear conversations

Allowing hearing problems to remain untreated can seriously strain relationships with friends, family and colleagues. Nonetheless, about 80 percent of Americans with hearing loss are not using any type of hearing aids. Admitting that you have a hearing impairment or being diagnosed with hearing loss, is especially difficult for those in their early 40's and 50's, equating it with getting older.

Even more difficult is taking the next step and actually wearing hearing aids. Research and anecdotal evidence, however, suggests that hearing aids can help people enjoy better relationships, build self-esteem, improve mental health, show greater independence and improve quality of life.

Contrary to common perceptions, hearing aids aren't large and bulky anymore and are much more sophisticated than past devices that simply amplified noise. Instead, today's hearing aids are



**Some hearing aids can be smaller than a dime or discreetly managed from a wristwatch.**

designed to incorporate the latest digital technology into tiny, discreet devices that are practically invisible and often placed entirely inside the ear canal.

For instance, Phonak Hearing Systems, an Illinois-based hearing aid manufacturer, helped revolutionize the industry with key technological advancements and innovations over the past 10 years.

Three of these advancements include: AudioZoom™, which allows wearers to zoom through background noise to be able to hear conversations more clearly in noisy places; WatchPilot™, a remote control that allows wearers to discreetly adjust their hearing aids' features such as volume from a wristwatch; and most recently Perseo™, the first hearing device that allows for maximum customization, so you can choose the way you hear in quiet and noisy situations according to your specific hearing needs.

Hearing loss shouldn't stop you from participating in life—ask your doctor for a referral to an audiologist or hearing specialist for a hearing check. It is recommended that you have your hearing checked every four years or annually, if you're over the age of 45. For more information on hearing loss, call 1-888-556-6473 or visit [www.phonak-us.com](http://www.phonak-us.com).