

Listen For Signs Of Hearing Loss

(NAPSA)—Now hear this: One in ten—or more than 26 million Americans—has some type of hearing problem. And if you think all of them are in their golden years, think again. Nearly half of those people are under the age of 65.

A person of any age can develop a hearing problem. Hearing loss can be caused by a variety of factors, such as noise, genetics, age, even some medications. Frequently, friends and family members notice the problem before the affected individual does. For adults, hearing loss can occur so gradually over the years that they don't even realize their hearing has deteriorated. The old adage of being "the last to know," can apply here.

Hearing problems can affect the quality and enjoyment of life. Ask yourself the following questions to evaluate whether you may be experiencing hearing loss:

- Do you ask others to repeat often, or do people seem to frequently mumble?
- Do you have trouble understanding conversation (even though you may hear it), particularly in a noisy place or where there is other background noise?
- Do you experience frustration, fatigue, stress or confusion trying to follow conversations?
- Do you pretend to understand, and then often respond inappropriately?
- Do you find yourself avoiding groups or strangers or withdrawing from social activities because it is too difficult to hear?
- Do you turn up the radio or TV louder than others prefer?
- Do you find telephone conversations increasingly difficult?
- Do you have trouble hearing when you are not facing the speaker?
- Do you turn one ear toward a speaker to help you hear?
- Do others comment that you speak too loudly?
- Do you experience ringing in your ears?
- Has a family member or friend ever commented that you don't hear well?
- Do you find yourself frequently denying you have a hearing problem?

A positive response to one of these questions does not necessarily indicate a hearing problem. However, if you answered "yes" to several, you may have hearing loss. The best way to find out for sure is to bring your concerns to a hearing care professional, who can perform a complete hearing test. The Better Hearing Institute can refer you to a professional in your area; just call 1-800-EAR-WELL (327-9355).



Don't let hearing loss prevent you from leading a full life, especially with today's readily available and technologically advanced hearing aids and batteries.

If you do have a problem, a hearing aid may be recommended. If so, know that you are not alone. It is estimated that nearly six million people wear hearing aids and another 20 million people have some form of hearing loss and could benefit from wearing an aid!

Today's technology has resulted in significant advances in treatment. There are a variety of hearing aid styles available, some no larger than a dime. Your hearing care professional can recommend the one that is right for you. Unlike hearing aids of the past, this new generation amplifies sounds in a way that is natural and pleasing. And better hearing can definitely improve the quality of your life.

Rayovac, a leader in hearing aid battery technology and maker of the world's longest lasting zinc air hearing aid battery, offers a booklet, "Arnold Palmer's Tips for Better Hearing." For a free copy, e-mail Rayovac at consumers@rayovac.com or call 1-800-800-5224.

Preventing Hearing Loss

In some cases, you may be able to control the extent of hearing loss. In our increasingly "noisy" society, there are many situations where your hearing could be affected over time. Protect yourself by taking the following precautions:

- Try to limit the time you spend in loud places (where you have to raise your voice to be heard).
- Wear earplugs when attending rock concerts or when around noisy machinery. Cotton balls are not effective.
- Likewise, don't sit near speakers at concerts.
- Think about personal stereo/headphone use.

Can the person sitting next to you hear your music through your headphones? If so, it is too loud.

If you suspect hearing loss, see your hearing care professional for testing, advice and treatment.

