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### **Hearing Loss and Depression**

Adults with untreated hearing loss are less likely to participate in organized social activities, leading to feelings of depression.

- Nearly 33% of adults 70 years and older have a hearing loss that impacts daily communication.<sup>1</sup>
- Less than 25% of adults with significant hearing loss use hearing aids.<sup>1</sup>
- On average, it takes people 7 years to seek treatment for hearing loss from the time they feel they are affected.
- Hearing loss can make it more difficult to interact with peers and can lead to decreased social engagement, depression, or bad moods.<sup>1</sup>
- There is a strong relationship between hearing loss and depression among US adults of all ages (18 and older).<sup>2</sup>
- Untreated hearing loss, social isolation, and depression can all contribute to an overall poorer quality of life.

**It is important to recognize early signs of hearing loss. Feelings of isolation and depression may be side effects of untreated hearing loss.**

### **Consider a hearing test if:**

1. You sometimes feel embarrassed to meet new people because you have a hard time understanding.
2. You feel frustrated when talking to members of your family because you have a hard time hearing them.
3. You limit your personal or social life because of your hearing.

### **Hearing loss may limit your social engagement and lead to depression if:**

1. You avoid simple duties.
2. You find yourself avoiding or withdrawing from social situations.
3. You feel alone even with family and friends.

### **References**

1. Lin, Frank R., and Marilyn Albert. "Hearing Loss and Dementia – Who's Listening?" *Aging & Mental Health*, U.S. National Library of Medicine, Aug. 2014, [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4075051/](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4075051/).
2. Li C, Zhang X, Hoffman HJ, Cotch MF, Themann CL, Wilson MR. Hearing Impairment Associated With Depression in US Adults, National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey 2005-2010. *JAMA Otolaryngol Head Neck Surg.* 2014;140(4):293–302. doi: 10.1001/jamaoto.2014.42