

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.¹
- Less than 25% of adults with significant hearing loss use hearing aids.¹
- 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.¹
- There is a strong relationship between hearing loss and depression among US adults of all ages (18 and older).²
- 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

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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