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When Should Hearing Be Tested?

By ARA Content

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by: **ARA Content**

(ARA) – What? ... I'm sorry I couldn't hear you? ... Could you repeat that? ... What did you say?

If these are the questions you ask when talking with others, then it's likely you need to have your hearing tested.

If you're wondering why your friends mumble when they talk to you or when restaurants suddenly become cacophonous, frustrating places, have your hearing tested. If your family consistently turns the television volume down when you're through watching it, have your hearing tested. If phone conversations are confusing or you find yourself having to concentrate on a speaker's lips to understand what they're saying, have your hearing tested. If you haven't had a hearing test since high school ... have a hearing test.

The statistics of hearing loss are compelling: One out of 10 Americans has hearing loss. By age 65, one out of three people has hearing loss. And of these, only one out of five actually seeks help.

That's unnecessary -- and unfortunate -- because there is help available. In a recent survey performed by the National Council on the Aging, hearing loss, left untreated, has a correlative relationship with debilitating psychological problems like depression, social anxiety and decreased social activity. The longer you ignore your hearing loss, the worse the physical, psychological and social effects. While noise-induced hearing loss is painless, it is permanent.

Nip potential hearing loss in the bud. Have your hearing tested. Doing so early may prevent damage or further damage to your hearing.

The Warning Signs

When Should Hearing Be Tested?

Usually, hearing loss is painless and gradual, typically developing over a period of 25 to 30 years. Without some qualitative test, you won't realize you're losing your hearing till it's too late. There is a degree of hearing loss associated with aging, and infections, sudden loud or prolonged noise, diseases (like Meniere's disease) or genetic disorders (like otosclerosis), medical conditions (like diabetes), even a build-up of ear wax can mean hearing loss.

Here are some warning signs to watch out for: Pain or ringing in your ears (tinnitus) after exposure to noise
Muffled speech sounds or music sounds dull after leaving a noisy area
Difficulty understanding speech in crowded situations
Difficulty in pinpointing sounds' locations (loss of stereo hearing)
Frequently mispronouncing words
Frequently asking people to repeat themselves

You'll be asked a series of more involved questions when you get your hearing tested. If you experience any of the above symptoms, you know what to do get your hearing tested.

Who Should I Talk To?

You need to see an audiologist, a professional who specializes in hearing health care. Audiologists are trained to conduct and interpret hearing tests, fit and dispense hearing aids, provide related counseling, habilitation, rehabilitation and hearing conservation.

Your audiologist will help you make an informed decision about your hearing care and provide you with communication strategies to help make listening easier. Typically this type of hearing evaluation is covered by insurance.

Surprisingly, most people who struggle with hearing loss think they're unusual. Hearing loss doesn't have to mean depression, frustration and social anxiety -- an audiologic rehabilitation program can train you to deal with your new situation, and an audiologist can help you find one.

Have your hearing tested as soon as possible, and talk to your audiologist about how often to test your hearing. You'll have a great chance of learning how to deal with hearing loss before it becomes debilitating.

Where To Start

If you think you have hearing loss, there are great resources to help you. In addition to undergoing an annual hearing test, check out the Audiology Awareness Campaign at www.audiologyawareness.com or call 1-888-833-EARS for a free 15-page booklet called "Listen Up, America ... We Hear You" and a free set of ear plugs.

Courtesy ARA Content,

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Hearing health resolutions for 2005

By Max Stein

Hearing health resolutions for 2005 by Max Stein

With a New Year upon us, the annual tradition of forming resolutions of self-improvement is definitely in season. While many articles about New Year's resolutions focus on things like careers, education or relationships, this article discusses your hearing health and what you can do to make it better.

For those of you don't give your hearing any thought, because you can hear just fine, make the resolution to have your hearing tested. In most cases, hearing loss is gradual, so you may not notice that you have hearing impairment until it becomes profound. A hearing test will give you peace of mind for the coming year. If your hearing is healthy, you won't have anything to worry about. On the other hand, if you have developed some hearing impairment, you'll be glad it was diagnosed early.

There may be some readers out there who know they are hard of hearing, but have done nothing about it. Fear, or a sense of loss could be holding you back from enjoying life to the fullest. Today's hearing aids possess advanced technology that can improve your hearing and your lifestyle. Best of all, they're smaller than ever. Some "completely in the ear canal" (CIC) models are virtually invisible. Resolve to overcome your fears about your hearing loss and schedule a consultation with a qualified hearing aid dispenser in your area. Once you face your fears and overcome, you'll be glad you made this resolution.

Others reading this article may own hearing aids, but don't wear them. Or you may know someone like that. If this is your situation, resolve to find out why. Are your hearing aids uncomfortable? Do they not provide noticeable amplification? Are you concerned about what other people think? Do you think a hearing aid is a sign of advancing age? Whatever the reason is you don't wear your hearing aid, it needs to be addressed this year. There could be many reasons for these problems and a qualified hearing aid dispenser can address all of these questions. This year resolve to improve your hearing health.

Hearing is something many of us take for granted. Get your hearing tested or resolve your hearing health issues. This year, put your hearing health at the top of the New Year's resolution list!

Max Stein is a freelance author who writes about a variety of contemporary topics.
maxstein_9@hotmail.com

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