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At What Age Should I Start Getting My Hearing Checked Regularly?

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When You Get Your Hearing Checked Depends on More Than Your Age

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While aging is one of the leading causes of hearing loss, there are several other factors that may indicate it's time to see your hearing care provider.

All ages can be screened for hearing loss. Newborns are now routinely tested before they leave the hospital, and school-age children are screened at their schools or at their physicians' offices. According to the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, adults should be screened at least every decade through age 50 and at three-year intervals thereafter.

Because hearing loss often occurs gradually, few who suffer from it realize how it affects all aspects of health, including overall quality of life. Research over the past 15 years has only begun to stress the importance of seeking treatment when hearing loss becomes a factor in daily life, but only one in five people actually seeks treatment after learning they aren't hearing their best. The four in five Americans who don't use hearing aids can sometimes delay treatment for so long that communication — even in the most optimal situations — becomes problematic.

Many are not aware of the social and psychological effects of hearing loss; if they were, they would take their hearing health more seriously. Impaired hearing is strongly associated with increased risk of dementia, anxiety, and depression, as well as poorer physical and mental health.

Hearing Loss and Your Overall Health

The effects of hearing loss are like dominos — one thing sets off another, which sets off another. Hearing loss can cause fatigue because of the strain of trying to hear. This can lead to stress, which causes other health issues like headaches as well as sleeping and eating problems.

When the television is on mute, we disengage from the message; we are not getting the full effect of the story. This is an example of what happens when someone is affected by hearing loss. The psychological and social detriments of hearing loss are intertwined. Being unable to hear what's being laughed about or to keep up with the conversation can cause feelings of frustration, depression, and embarrassment. Relationship problems can also arise due to lack of communication and frustration between everyone involved.

Hearing Protection and Prevention

Hearing health is whole-body health. If you take preventive and educated measures when it comes to your health, you will be helping your hearing and vice versa.

Hearing protection is essential in reducing the risk of noise-induced hearing loss, which is the most common hearing loss. Wear earplugs when around loud noise — and not just at concerts but at sporting events, when hunting, or when working with power tools. Hearing protection comes in all kinds of forms to fit your lifestyle, budget, and unique needs. Ask your audiologist whether earmuffs, foam earplugs, or custom earplugs are best for you.

Prevention begins with being aware. Knowing the signs, symptoms, and causes of hearing loss will help you be attuned to hearing problems. The best way to do this is to get your hearing checked regularly. If something happens to your hearing, don't hesitate — get checked out right away by an audiologist. Hearing tests are an extremely easy, quick, and painless way to determine if you have hearing loss.

How's Your Hearing?

Get an idea of how a hearing impairment may be affecting your life by filling out the downloadable hearing checklist and score sheet. If you scored 10 or more points, it's time to get your hearing tested professionally. Contact us for a professional hearing exam.

Download: Hearing Checklist and Score Sheet

http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/hearing/hearing_loss/baseline_testing.html
<http://www.asha.org/public/hearing/Who-Should-be-Screened/>