
WHY WAIT?

75% WAIT FOR YEARS, EVEN AFTER DIAGNOSIS

In an online study completed by hear-it.org revealed three in four people wait years before seeking treatment for their hearing loss. More than 37% reported living with their hearing loss for more than 5 years. This statistic stays the same even after a hearing loss diagnosis. The question then is Why?

Hearing aid users wait,
on average, **10 years** before
getting help for hearing loss.



There are several main reasons noted as to why people wait so long to receive treatment and obtain hearing aids, with the biggest three being denial of the need, cosmetics or physical appearance, and usability.

Denial of the need. Even though a person has been diagnosed with hearing loss and was recommended hearing aids, they may still feel like they get along alright without hearing aids. While this may be true in some cases, more so they are not realizing how much they struggle in different listening environments. There are probably some places where they have difficulty hearing and some

people they have difficulty understanding.

Cosmetic or physical appearance. Even though hearing loss can affect a wide range of ages, there is still a stigma attached to hearing aids. Many people feel that if they wear a hearing aid, they are going to look old and may not want friends or family to see their hearing aids. In the past, hearing aids were big and bulky, but as technology has improved, so has the look and size of hearing aids. Now, there are hearing aids that are now virtually invisible. So, if your reason for not wanting a hearing aid is that you don't want people to see it, then you have run out of excuses. In general, not being able to hear and follow the conversation makes you look older than wearing a hearing aid.

Usability. Some people may feel that wearing a hearing aid is too much hassle and too difficult. You do have to remember to put them in, change the battery when needed, and clean them daily. Some hearing aids also allow for control of volume and different programs, however, digital hearing aids will make the necessary changes automatically and seamlessly. Your Audiologist will discuss and show you how to manage your hearing aids and how to clean them. If you prefer to have more control with your aids, they will also guide you and practice how to make the changes yourself, without confusion or stress.

There are many reasons why you shouldn't wait to wear hearing aids once a hearing loss has been identified, including decreased quality of life, relationship strain, and decreased socialization.

Quality of life can be diminished. Several studies have shown that those with untreated hearing loss are more likely to experience social isolation, depression, anxiety, and lack of confidence.

Relationship strain. Communication is crucial in any relationship, whether it is your significant other, friends, or family members. When there is a consistent breakdown in communication between you and your loved ones, the relationship can start to suffer.

Decreased socialization. When hearing and understanding is difficult, you are more likely to avoid certain situations which require more effort to hear. This can result in reduced social activities such as volunteering, religious events, or group outings and dinners.

Don't wait too long before getting your hearing tested and, if needed, getting fit with hearing aids, as sooner rather than later, is a very smart move. Just like our joints and muscles, the use-it or lose-it principle applies to our hearing. Understanding hearing loss and treatment options, such as hearing aids, can assure you don't lose more hearing before it is too late. In a recent study, some surprising results came to light, as seen below.

- 23% of individuals said their hearing loss is affecting their success in the workplace, while 25% said hearing loss is affecting their earning potential.
- 40% of the individuals who reported having a hearing loss said that their loss has affected their home life, including watching TV with others and social gatherings.
- 57% said they often have difficulty hearing on a cell phone.

Despite the work and lifestyle limitations, the study found that most people impacted by hearing loss are not seeking treatment. Only 42% of those who reportedly have a severe hearing loss wear hearing aids. Hearing loss is easily treatable, but many are resistant. Don't let denial, cosmetics, or fear over using technology prevent you from hearing and communicating at your absolute best and improving your listening life!

Resources

Image: <https://www.starkey.com/blog/2017/12/Ten-years-wait-time-to-treat-hearing-loss>

"Do I really need a hearing aid?" <https://www.everydayhearing.com/hearing-aids/do-i-really-need-a-hearing-aid/>

"Waiting for treatment." <https://www.hear-it.org/hearing-impaired-people-wait-for-years-before-seeking-treatment->

"Sooner is better." <https://www.healthyhearing.com/report/47528-Hearing-loss-treatment-sooner>