



# UNTREATED HEARING LOSS MAY LEAD TO DEPRESSION



Mt. Harrison Audiology

*and Hearing Aids LLC*

[www.MtHarrisonAudiology.com](http://www.MtHarrisonAudiology.com)

Depression is a serious concern in our country, as it can lead to social isolation, loss of employment and be a risk factor for cognitive issues. Hearing loss can increase the risk for depression and its consequences.

## Symptoms of Depression

Those suffering from the debilitating effects of hearing loss may be at risk for additional health woes, according to a study by the National Council on Aging (NCOA). Those over the age of 50 are more likely to experience depression and its related symptoms, including anxiety, anger, frustration, paranoia and emotional instability. This correlation between hearing loss and depression was corroborated by studies done in Italy and Australia.

Additionally, those who suffer from hearing loss are less likely to participate in social activities, leading to isolation and worsening the situation. Depression can lead to more serious symptoms, and because it affects an estimated 1 in 12 Americans, it's important to understand the dangers faced by those with hearing loss and respond effectively.

## Depression & Hearing Loss

Multiple studies have shown a strong link between untreated hearing loss and depression, the result of social withdrawal and isolation. Thirty percent of patients with severe hearing loss who do not wear hearing aids report depression, compared with 22 percent of hearing aid users. Conversely, 42 percent of hearing aid users regularly participate in social activities versus 32 percent of nonusers.

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association has established guidelines for determining when an individual should seek a hearing evaluation. Signs to look for include:

- Difficulty understanding speech, especially when background noise is present.
- The individual isolates him or herself from social gatherings and public situations.
- They watch television or listen to music at a much louder volume than normal.
- They often ask people to repeat themselves.

## Next Steps

Because mental health affects so many other facets of an otherwise healthy lifestyle, it's important to encourage loved ones suffering from depression to seek treatment. Even mild forms of hearing loss can lead to an increased risk of negative emotional experiences. The sooner these are discovered, the better the odds of successful treatment. Mt. Harrison Audiology & Hearing Aids recommends regular hearing exams to combat depression.

*Source: Untreated hearing loss linked to depression, social isolation in seniors. American Academy of Audiology*

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