

**May 2016
Hearing Awareness
Month**

- **Hearing Challenges**

There is a direct link between age and hearing loss

- About 18% of American adults between the ages of 45 and 54, 30% of adults between ages 65 and 74, and 47% of adults ages 75 and older have hearing impairments.

- **Hearing Challenges**

- Limit background noise
- Speak clearly with more volume
- Do not chew gum or eat while speaking
- Always talk face to face



- **About 26 million Americans**
- between the ages of 20 and 69 have high frequency hearing loss due to exposure to loud noises at work or in leisure activities.

“God, what are You saying?”



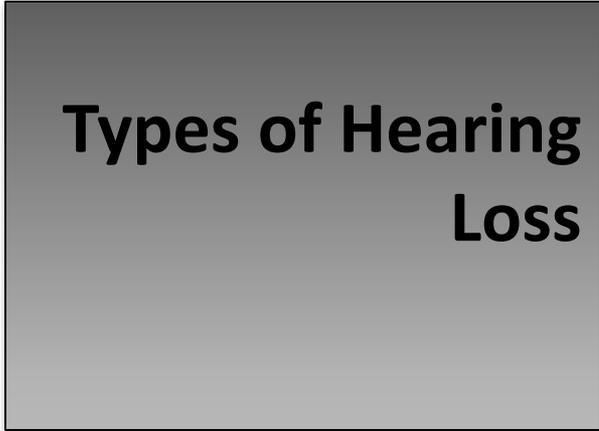
- **1 in 5 Americans have some degree of hearing loss**
- in at least one ear. That is 48 million people nationwide this total exceeds previous hearing care industry estimates of approximately 25 million.

- Noise-induced hearing loss is due to damaged hair cells that are found in the inner ear. These hair cells are small sensory cells that convert the sounds into electrical signals that travel to the brain. Once these hair cells are damaged, they cannot grow back, ultimately causing permanent hearing loss. This damage results from long exposure to loud noises over 85 decibels, such as an ambulance siren or motorcycle.



- **Conductive Hearing Loss**

With Conductive hearing loss, sound is impaired in the outer and/or middle ear. This will typically result in sound levels being reduced and the loss of soft sounds. Other causes that are common may include ear infections, earwax, fluid in the middle ear from a cold, among other diseases and disorders. For conductive hearing loss the most common treatments are medical and surgical, however depending on your hearing loss hearing aids may be an effective alternative.



Types of Hearing Loss

■ **Sensorineural Hearing Loss**

Sensorineural hearing loss occurs when there is failure to fully or accurately transmit sound through the inner ear (cochlea) or along the neural pathways. The most common cause of this hearing loss is damage to the interior workings of the cochlea.

- Sound vibrations pass over and stimulate minute hair cells when the sounds are funneled from the other ear, through the middle ear, and into the cochlea. Sound vibrations cannot be accurately converted into neuro-electrical impulses that travel through the auditory nerve to the brain when these hair cells are damaged. Resulting from this is a reduction in perception and interpretation of the hearing impulses. By carefully targeting sound amplification with hearing aids you can compensate for damaged hair cells.
- Sensorineural hearing loss can be caused congenital (present at birth) or acquired (after birth). Causes of congenital hearing loss might include: infections, prematurity, hereditary factors, or birth trauma. Acquired causes include: overexposure to noise, ear infections, head injury, disease (like meningitis or encephalitis), or a negative side effect of some drugs.



- **Mixed Hearing Loss**

A mixture of Conductive and Sensorineural hearing loss is what we call a mixed hearing loss. Both types of hearing loss may be present at the same time when one type of loss is present and damage occurs to another part of the ear. Usually mixed hearing loss is treated medically and surgically, however hearing aids may be effective in certain cases.

- **Tinnitus**

You sometimes may hear a ringing in the ears or a constant buzzing that is associated with hearing loss. This constant sound is called “tinnitus” (pronounced either ti-NIGHT-is or TIN-i-tus. Both pronunciations are correct). Tinnitus and hearing loss often go hand in hand but they do not always occur together. There are several ways to mask or manage tinnitus, but the exact cause of the condition is unknown. Hearing aids have provided relief of tinnitus when the condition accompanies hearing loss. Hearing aids can help bring in the ambient sounds that naturally cover the ringing, when the hearing loss is in the same frequency range as the tinnitus.



- **Signs and Symptoms of Hearing Loss**
- **While hearing loss varies in different causes, types, and degrees the symptoms basically the same. Anyone with hearing loss will usually experience the following:**
- I can hear, but understanding what is said is difficult.
- I hear sounds, but have trouble distinguishing words.
- I am frequently asking people to repeat themselves.
- When in restaurants and meetings I have difficulty understanding conversations.
- My hearing keeps me from enjoying good times with friends and family.
- I am constantly embarrassed by my hearing difficulties.
- I have to turn up the volume when watching TV.
- I struggle voices of women and children.
- I have trouble hearing in movies, concerts, church, and group conversations.



- Older adults: What challenges might older adults have? Retrieved from:www.cdc.gov/healthliteracy/DevelopMaterials/Audiences/OlderAdults/understanding-challenges.html
- Hearing Awareness. Retrieved from:<http://www.hearingawarenessfoundation.org/education/>

References