

# Facts About Hearing Loss

Approximately 36 million Americans suffer from hearing loss.

- More than half of the people with hearing loss are younger than age 65.
- Untreated hearing loss can affect your ability to understand speech and can negatively impact your social and emotional well-being—hearing impairment can decrease your quality of life!
- Hearing loss is the third most common health problem in the United States.
- **Signs you may have a hearing loss:**
  - Difficulty hearing people talk in noisy environments such as a restaurant, shopping mall, in a car, or at the movie theater.
  - People seem to “mumble” all the time.
  - Family, friends, or colleagues often have to repeat themselves when speaking with you.
  - You have trouble hearing people when they are not facing you or are in another room.
  - You have trouble following conversations.
  - You have ringing, buzzing, or hissing sounds in your ears.
- **What causes hearing loss?**
  - Exposure to excessive loud noise.
  - Ear infections, trauma, or ear disease.
  - Harm of the inner ear and ear drum from contact with a foreign object (cotton swabs, fingers, bugs).
  - Illness or certain medications.
  - Deteriorating hearing due to the normal aging process.
- **How to protect your hearing.**
  - Wear hearing protection when around sounds louder than 85dB for a long period of time. There are different types of hearing protection such as foam earplugs, earmuffs and custom hearing protection devices. Contact your local audiologist for custom hearing protection devices.
  - Turn down the volume when listening to the radio, the TV, MP3 player, or anything through ear buds and headphones. (Visit [www.TurnItToTheLeft.com](http://www.TurnItToTheLeft.com))
  - Walk away from the noise.
  - And, other than hearing protection, do not put anything in your ear!

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If you think you may have a hearing loss, visit [www.HowsYourHearing.org](http://www.HowsYourHearing.org) and click on the “Find an Audiologist” link to locate and set up an appointment with an audiologist in your area to get your hearing checked.