

What are the impacts of prolonged, untreated hearing loss?

Hearing Loss and Depression

In 1999, the National Council on Aging (NCOA) published a unique, large-scale study on the impact of untreated hearing loss. The study found that individuals with hearing loss who did not use hearing aids were **almost twice as likely to experience depression** as those who were treating their hearing loss. Usually, this is the result of social withdrawal and isolation because of the difficulties hearing loss creates for an individual over time.

In fact, a Newpoll telephone survey published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* supported anecdotal evidence that almost 20% of individuals with untreated hearing loss exhibited at least three key symptoms of depression.

The NCOA study supports that using hearing instruments reduces the likelihood of depression, sadness, anxiety, or paranoia. When mild depression is exhibited – characterized by withdrawal, mood changes, and short temper – a hearing screening is recommended as part of an evaluation.

Next month we'll discuss when you should consider hearing aid technology and which hearing aid technology is right for you.

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