

This guide provides information on hearing testing and hearing aid use.<sup>1</sup>

Hearing loss is not harmless: it can lead to depression, anxiety and social isolation. A study<sup>2</sup> of 2300 hearing impaired adults over 50, found that untreated hearing loss affected family relationships, self-confidence, sense of safety, social life, and mental health. Hearing aid users report many benefits, including improved relationships, social life, and sense of independence. However, barriers to using hearing aids such as denial, cost, and vanity prevent many people from experiencing these benefits.

**Test your knowledge about hearing aids.**<sup>3</sup>

T	F	Don't Know	Statement
			1. You should take the battery out of a hearing aid at night.
			2. To clean the ear mold wash it in warm soapy water.
			3. It is normal for a hearing aid to whistle when you are wearing it.
			4. A simple way to check the battery is to turn the hearing aid up and listen for a whistling sound.
			5. Hearing aid batteries are poisonous. Keep out of the reach of children.

Answers are found at the end of the guide.

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<sup>1</sup> **\*Disclaimer:** The information provided in Elder Wise Fact Sheets is obtained from reliable sources. The information is provided to assist you and your family with decisions related to health, housing and relationships but is not intended to recommend any specific service provider or product.

<sup>2</sup> National Council on Aging <http://www.ncoa.org/content.cfm?sectionID=105&detail=46>

<sup>3</sup> Care of hearing aids: [http://www.widhh.com/pdf/care\\_of\\_hearing\\_aids.pdf](http://www.widhh.com/pdf/care_of_hearing_aids.pdf)

## Wondering if someone you know is experiencing hearing loss?

Look for the following signs: <sup>4</sup>

- Asking people to repeat themselves
- Misunderstanding conversations
- Staying home to avoid social situations
- Complaining that people mumble
- Strained personal and family relationships
- Undue fatigue and stress at the end of the day
- Turning up the volume on the TV and/or radio
- Difficulties understanding speech in noisy situations
- Pretending to hear what was said
- Intensively looking at who is talking

## Want to help someone to hear you?

### DO

- Be sure the room lighting is good. Have the light shining on your face, not from behind.
- Get the person's attention before you begin to speak.
- Remove background noise such as radio, television.
- Directly face the hearing impaired person.
- Speak in a normal fashion without shouting or raising your voice.
- Speak at a moderate pace, and enunciate clearly.
- Be patient if the person misunderstands.
- If a person misunderstands, rephrase the sentence rather than repeating it.

### DON'T

- Have objects in your mouth such as gum, food or cigarettes.
- Put your hands or other objects in front of your mouth.
- Talk too rapidly.
- Speak from another room

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<sup>4</sup> Skiff Medical Center <http://www.skiffmed.com/audiology.asp?id=45037768>

## REMEMBER

Group situations are very challenging for a hearing impaired person. Assist them by telling them the topic of conversation and other hints/clues if they are having problems.

Recognize everyone, especially the hearing impaired, hears and understands less when feeling tired or ill.

## Assistive Devices

A TTY is a small, electronic device with a keyboard and a small screen, which allows someone who can't use a regular phone to communicate over the telephone lines. If you want to phone someone deaf who uses a TTY, you do so through your local telephone Relay Service. The relay operator acts as a communication link over the telephone by typing what the hearing person says so that it appears on the TTY of the deaf person and voicing to the hearing person what the deaf person types in reply.

## Want to protect your own hearing?

- Limit exposure to loud noise
- Use safety earplugs
- Do not smoke

## Answers to the Quiz

1. True
2. True
3. False
4. True
5. True