

# The Connection Between Hearing Loss and Memory

## Your Brain: Hearing and Memory

The area of the brain responsible for hearing is also responsible for memory and learning. Any damage that occurs in the brain affecting your hearing could also affect your memory.

Research has shown that when your ability to hear well decreases, your ability to think clearly also decreases.

## How Hearing Loss Affects You

When left untreated, hearing loss can affect your memory and quality of life. You may:

- **need more time to understand information.**

Not all of the information is getting from the ears to the brain in people with hearing loss. Because of this, the brain has to work harder to make up for the hearing loss.

- **avoid social situations.**

Hearing loss can affect your ability to communicate with others. This can cause you to feel embarrassed, frustrated, tired or all three. You may avoid talking to people or going to social events. This can cause you to feel lonely or distant from others.

Treating your hearing loss can help prevent these memory problems from occurring and improve your overall quality of life.

## Treatment

Because hearing loss occurs little by little, many people may experience a decrease in their ability to hear well without knowing it.

### Did You Know?

Wearing hearing aids has been proven to help:

- improve symptoms of depression
- decrease feelings of loneliness
- improve overall quality of life.

The American Speech Language and Hearing Association recommends a hearing test once every 10 years until age 50 and every 3 years after that.

Talk with your health care provider if you have think you may have hearing loss. He or she will likely refer you to an audiologist (hearing specialist) or otolaryngologist (doctor who specializes in ear, nose and throat care) for a hearing test.

If the results of your hearing test show you need medical treatment, you will need to see your primary care provider or an otolaryngologist. Treatment may include medicine or surgery.

If the results of your hearing test show you do not need medical treatment, hearing aids, other helpful ways to communicate or both may be recommended.

## Whom to Call With Questions

Talk with your health care provider if you have questions.