

Myth busters: hearing and hearing loss

Even though millions of people are affected by hearing loss, there are still a lot of misconceptions and myths surrounding hearing loss that can hinder understanding and treatment.

Time to debunk some of the most persistent myths!



Only older people experience hearing loss.

While it is true that hearing loss is more common among older adults, it can affect people of all ages. In fact, according to the World Health Organization, around 1.1 billion young people worldwide are at risk of hearing loss due to exposure to loud sounds, including music.¹



Hearing loss is always caused by loud noise exposure.

While exposure to loud noise is a common cause of hearing loss, it is not the only cause. Other factors, including aging, genetics, infections, medications, and diseases can also contribute to hearing loss.

People with noisy jobs, e.g. construction workers and musicians, are at higher risk of developing a hearing loss. Custom-made hearing protection solutions can help prevent hearing loss!²



Hearing loss only affects the ability to hear sounds.

Hearing loss can affect more than just the ability to hear sounds. It can also impact speech recognition, making it difficult to understand words and follow conversations. Additionally, hearing loss can lead to social isolation, depression, and cognitive decline if left untreated.



If I can hear some sounds, my hearing is fine.

Hearing loss is not an all-or-nothing condition. People often perceive early hearing loss as "They can hear but not understand" speech. In fact, hearing loss often starts with difficulty hearing high-pitched sounds, such as the voices of women and children, before progressing to difficulty hearing lower-pitched sounds.



There is nothing that can be done about hearing loss.

While there is no cure for hearing loss, there are many treatment options available to manage the condition. Hearing aids, cochlear implants, accessories that boost hearing in challenging listening environment, and communication strategies can all help people with hearing loss lead a fulfilled and active life.



Hearing aids will make hearing loss worse.

Hearing aids are designed to improve hearing and help people with hearing loss communicate better. They do not make hearing loss worse. In fact, wearing hearing aids can improve communication, socialization, and overall quality of life for people with hearing loss.

What many people do not know: New hearing aid users do not automatically hear everything instantly, but the brain needs time to adjust to hearing again.



There are many more myths surrounding hearing loss that can prevent people from seeking treatment or understanding their condition and overall well-being for all. Working hand in hand, ENTs and HCPs can bust these myths and emphasize the importance of hearing screening.



References:

¹ World Health Organization (2015). 1.1 billion people at risk of hearing loss. <https://www.who.int/vietnam/news/detail/10-03-2015-1.1-billion-people-at-risk-of-hearing-loss>

² Tikka C, Verbeek JH, Kateman E, Morata TC, Dreschler WA, Ferrite S. (2017). Interventions to prevent occupational noise-induced hearing loss. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, Issue 7. Art. No.: CD006396. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD006396.pub4