

Quick Facts & Stats

Hearing Loss

Hearing loss is one of the most common conditions affecting older adults. It can lead to social withdrawal or be mistaken for dementia.

About 33% of Americans 65 to 74 years of age and 47% of those 75 and older have hearing loss.

Presbycusis comes on gradually as a person ages and mostly affects people over 50; it makes it difficult for a person to tolerate loud sounds or hear what others are saying.

Tinnitus is the ringing, hissing, or roaring sound in the ears frequently caused by exposure to loud noise or certain medicines. It is common in older adults.

Depression and withdrawal affect older people who can't hear well; they feel frustrated or embarrassed about not understanding what is being said.

Otitis media can lead to long-term hearing loss if it is not treated.

Some hearing aids can be plugged into TVs, stereos, microphones, and personal FM systems to help people hear better.

Confusion or uncooperativeness can be mistaken for dementia when they may be caused by hearing loss.

Certain antibiotics are ototoxic.

Reference

Information provided by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Senior Health. Hearing loss. Frequently asked questions. NIH Senior Health Web site. <http://nihseniorhealth.gov>. Accessed February 16, 2009.



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