

## **Hearing Loss**

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Hearing loss is the #1 disability in the world, but also the most preventable disability in the world. There are 28 million people in the United States with hearing loss. Of those 28 million, 1.5 million were born deaf or became deaf at an early age; another 1.5 million of those people became deaf at an older age, and 25 million people are "hard of hearing." However, only 6 million of these people wear hearing aids.

As far as age goes, the number of people over age 55 with a hearing loss is 1 out of 4; and nearly 90% of people over the age of 80 have a hearing loss. Unfortunately, people who are hard of hearing are often mislabeled as snobbish, rude, inattentive, confused, senile, or odd when, in fact, THEY JUST CAN'T HEAR.

Please watch for these signs and behaviors that can indicate hearing loss:

1. Difficulty understanding words or certain parts of words;
2. Frequently misunderstanding words (for example, face vs. vase);
3. Frequently asking people to repeat words;
4. Responding inappropriately to what is said;
5. Failing to respond to what is said;
6. Pointing to one's ears and shaking one's head "no;"
7. Blaming others for not speaking clearly;
8. The person with the hearing loss watches the speakers mouth and face--appears to be staring;
9. The person with the suspected hearing loss is defensive about communication problems;
10. The person with the suspected hearing loss has difficulty following conversations when more than one person is talking or when there is a great deal of noise;
11. There is difficulty or an inability to understand when people look away and continue to speak to them or when they are spoken to from behind;
12. There is difficulty understanding in high stress situations;
13. The person acts more withdrawn in noisy or group situations than during one-on-one situations.

If any of these are noticeable among your families, your loved ones, or the people you work with, please have them contact a doctor, an audiologist (which is a specialist in hearing difficulties) or the Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing at their website--[www.cdhh.org](http://www.cdhh.org)

There is a Bible verse that says "So faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." (Romans 10:17). We do want everyone to be able to hear, or if they have a problem, to know how to be able to get the problem treated.