

# Depression and Hearing Loss.

## Prevalence of depression

**5%**

of adults in the U.S. report regular feelings of depression.<sup>1</sup>

**21 million**

U.S. adults have experienced at least one major depressive episode.<sup>2</sup>

**11%**

of physician office visits in 2019, noted depression on the medical record.<sup>1</sup>

Depression is a common comorbidity among individuals with chronic health conditions.<sup>3</sup>

## Facts about depression and hearing loss

- Hearing loss is one of the most common chronic conditions among older adults. It is also one of the most under-treated health conditions in the U.S., as only 21% of hearing aid candidates utilize hearing aids.<sup>9</sup>
- Hearing aid use has been found to be effective at reducing participation restrictions and increasing social activity, as well as improving hearing-specific and overall health-related quality of life.<sup>10,11</sup>
- There is evidence that hearing aids improve mental well-being within the first 6-12 months of use.<sup>12,13</sup>

## Psychosocial consequences of untreated hearing loss

Untreated hearing loss often results in difficulty understanding speech in social situations, increasing the risk for feelings of isolation.<sup>4,5</sup> An association between poorer speech understanding in noise and greater self-reported levels of social loneliness has been observed in non-hearing aid users.<sup>6</sup>

Over time, untreated hearing loss may become a chronic stressor which may produce or worsen depressive symptoms.<sup>4</sup> Hearing loss has been found to be associated with an approximately 50% increase in risk of depression over a 5-year period.<sup>7</sup>

Greater self-reported hearing difficulties are associated with higher rates of psychological distress, antidepressant medication use, and use of mental health services.<sup>8</sup>

## How we can help

It's important to understand the connection between untreated hearing loss and depression. In addition to diagnosing hearing loss, we responsibly educate and work to treat hearing loss to support overall well-being.

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