

Dementia and Hearing Loss

What is Dementia?

Dementia is not one disease, but a group of symptoms. One of the causes may be various disorders that affect the brain. You may have heard of Alzheimer's disease, which is the most common type of dementia.

Anyone can get dementia, although it is more common in people over 65 years. This is not a normal part of our aging process.

How can Dementia affect me?

Each person experiences dementia in a different way. Some examples of common symptoms:



Memory loss



Difficulty when there are distractions



Struggling to plan and problem-solve



Struggling to speak, write, or understand



Changes in mood and personality



Withdrawal from work or social activities

Even after a diagnosis of dementia, people often lead active and fulfilling lives for many years.

How does hearing loss relate to Dementia?

Age-related hearing loss can increase the risk of dementia. The greater the hearing loss, the higher the risk of dementia. The drop in mental function may also be steeper.

Mild age-related hearing loss **doubles** risk of dementia.

Moderate age-related hearing loss **triples** the risk of dementia

There are many ways how hearing loss may relate to dementia:

- Hearing loss may lead to social isolation and feelings of loneliness and depression. These effects may increase the risk of dementia.
- You may get tired more easily and need more effort to understand speech with hearing loss. This extra load may leave less energy for memory and other tasks that involve thinking.



How can I manage my hearing loss?

Detect and treat hearing loss early to lower the risk of dementia

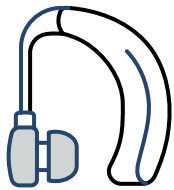


Your **family doctor** can address your concerns.



Your **audiologist** can test your hearing. They can recommend tips and technology to improve communication.

Technology can help you hear better. If you have hearing loss, it is better to wear hearing aids early. This helps maintain mental function.



Hearing aids

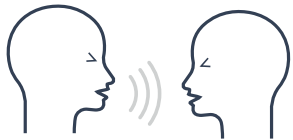
Boost sounds that are not heard well.
Helpful in most situations.
You may still have difficulty in noise.



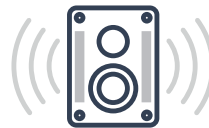
Assistive Listening Devices (ALDs)

Help hearing in specific situations. For example, amplify a doorbell; stream audio from your phone or television to a hearing aid.

Here are some communication strategies you can use:



Speak face-to-face.



Reduce background noise.



Write down information.



Make sure the room is well-lit.



Ask people to speak clearly and slowly, but do not shout.



In groups, speak one at a time.

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