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**The American Academy of Audiology Celebrates**

**March 3, World Hearing Day**

Hearing loss in the U.S. has reached record numbers

**RESTON, Va., Feb. 8, 2022—**In 2007, the World Health Organization designated March 3 as [World Hearing Health Day](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/deafness-and-hearing-loss) in order to raise awareness to the growing numbers of those suffering from hearing loss and the importance of hearing health care. In 2017, the National Institutes of Health’s National Institute on Deafness & Other Communication Disorders stated that [48 million Americans suffer some type of hearing loss](https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/listen-infographic). And, in 2021, the [WHO stated that approximately 432 million people worldwide have disabling hearing loss—34 million of these are children](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/deafness-and-hearing-loss#:~:text=Over%205%25%20of%20the%20world's,will%20have%20disabling%20hearing%20loss.). It’s estimated that, by 2050, approximately 900 people worldwide (or, one in every 10) will have disabling hearing loss. The numbers continue to grow annually.

During the pandemic, many with hearing loss have recognized hearing difficulties due to masks. These are people who have been overcompensating through lip reading. Some realized they were lip reading but also denied they had hearing loss while others have not recognized the extent of the difficulty they experience communicating until they could no longer read lips.

The [American Academy of Audiology](http://www.audiology.org) is committed to increasing awareness of the consequences of untreated hearing loss, while educating the public and other healthcare providers regarding the diagnosis, prevention and treatment of hearing loss. “The growing health problem of hearing loss is often unrecognized in U.S. adults, adolescents and children and it leads to a long list of associated challenges including depression, isolation, academic delays, impaired communication, falls and cognitive decline. We are grateful that this awareness day was created to shine a light on the significance of hearing as part of our overall health and the importance of optimizing it for a lifetime,” said Sarah Sydlowski, Au.D., Ph.D., MBA, president of the American Academy of Audiology. Sydlowski is also audiology director of the Hearing Implant Program and associate chief improvement officer at the Cleveland Clinic.

As the baby boomer population ages, more Americans are facing hearing health challenges. According to the NIH NIDCD, approximately 20 percent of American adults aged 20 to 69 have some trouble with hearing and approximately [28.8 million could benefit from the use of hearing devices.](https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/shareable-images/text-description-infographic-hearing-loss-and-hearing-aid-use)

While age is still the greatest factor in hearing loss, many younger people also experience reduced hearing due to exposure to loud music and sound including occupational noise. Among adults aged 70 and older with hearing loss who could benefit from hearing aids, fewer than one in three (30 percent) has ever used them. With adults aged 20 to 69 only approximately 16 percent of those who would benefit from hearing aids has ever used them. The utilization of cochlear implants is estimated to be approximately five percent of those who need one.

“Audiologists are the experts in hearing health,” explained Sydlowski. “Anyone having difficulty hearing, or whose family, friends or co-workers have told them they suspect they have difficulty hearing, should see an audiologist. The audiologist will thoroughly assess the individual’s hearing and understanding ability through a series of tests and if there is the opportunity to improve hearing ability, will then discuss available options.”

Some signs of hearing loss may include:

* Needing to turn up the volume of the television, radio, or stereo and having other family members complain that the volume is too loud.
* Difficulty understanding people speaking to you and asking people to repeat themselves.
* Difficulty with phone conversations and understanding the other person.
* Feeling like people are mumbling or not speaking clearly.
* Sudden inability to hear the doorbell, the dog barking, and other household sounds.
* People telling you that you speak too loudly.
* Ringing in the ears.

School-aged children with hearing loss will sometimes exhibit poor school performance because they can’t understand the teacher assignments or classroom interactions. If hearing loss has been present from a young age, they often don’t recognize the loss and can’t identify the problem.

It’s important to know that while common, hearing loss is not typical and is not something that has to be tolerated. Audiologists can improve your hearing and your quality of life and sooner intervention is better than later.

For more information or to locate an audiologist, click [here](https://www.audiology.org/consumers-and-patients/) or visit [www.audiology.org](http://www.audiology.org).

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The American Academy of Audiology is the world's largest professional organization of, by and for audiologists. Representing the interests of audiologists and future audiologists nationwide, the Academy is dedicated to providing quality hearing care services through professional development, education, research, and increased public awareness of hearing and balance disorders. For more information, visit [www.audiology.org](http://www.audiology.org).