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**May is National Better Hearing Month**

Many Americans recognize their extent of hearing loss during COVID-19 as

hearing loss hits record numbers

**RESTON, Va., April 21, 2021—**Mask wearing has forced many of the 37.5 million Americans with hearing loss to face their hearing loss. Often people will compensate by reading lips and may not realize, or acknowledge, the hearing loss. During COVID-19, the number of Americans seeking audiologists has increased.

Hearing loss causes many to feel isolated. Large numbers of the population experience hearing loss, according to a [2016 study by the National Institutes of Health NIDCD](https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/statistics/quick-statistics-hearing), approximately 15 percent (37.5 million) of American adults aged 20 to 69, have some trouble with hearing and approximately 28.8 million could benefit from the use of hearing aids. As the baby boomer population ages, more Americans are forced to face hearing health challenges. Growing numbers of younger Americans are also reporting hearing problems.

While age is still the greatest factor in hearing loss, many younger people also experience hearing problems due to exposure to loud music and noises 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) have used them.

“Research demonstrates that untreated hearing loss in seniors is related to poor health outcomes including increasing the odds of falling,” said Angela Shoup, Ph.D., president of the American Academy of Audiology, who is also executive director of the Callier Center for Communication Disorders and a professor of Speech, Language and Hearing in the School of Behavioral and Brain Sciences at the University of Texas at Dallas. “Individuals with even mild hearing loss are at three times more risk of experiencing a fall and falls are the leading cause of fatalities in Americans over 65,” Shoup added. Research indicates that seniors with untreated hearing loss are more likely to develop cognitive decline up to 40% faster than those without hearing loss.

Audiologists are the experts in hearing health. Hearing aids are not always the only or recommended solution, which is why it’s important to see an audiologist to further determine the appropriate treatment. Sometimes the cause is temporary or a symptom of another illness or disease. An audiologist will run various tests to determine the cause and most appropriate treatment approach. The Academy represents more than 14,000 audiologists across the country and has an extensive “[Find an Audiologist](https://members.audiology.org/cvweb/cgi-bin/memberdll.dll/info?wrp=find-an-audiologist.htm)” directory, where consumers can locate audiologists based on geography and specialty areas.

For more information, 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 approximately 14,000 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 or to find an audiologist, go to [www.howsyourhearing.org](http://www.howsyourhearing.org).