

A Hearing Aid is Less Conspicuous than Your Hearing Loss

By Kathy Mellott, Au.D., Doctor of Audiology

There are several common myths or misunderstandings about hearing loss and hearing aids. This article will attempt to explain and/or dispel those myths and misunderstandings.

Myth number one: "Hearing aids will make me look older and handicapped." Quoting from the Better Hearing Institute, "Looking older is clearly more affected by almost all other factors besides hearing aids. It is not the hearing aids that make one look older, it is what one may believe they imply. If hearing aids help you function like a normal hearing person, for all intents and purposes, the stigma is removed." Hearing aid manufacturers are aware that looks can be an obstacle to wearing a hearing aid. That is why there are hearing aids that fit totally in the ear canal or are so small they hide behind the ear. But more importantly, keep in mind that "a hearing loss is more obvious than a hearing aid." Nodding and smiling when you do not understand what was said actually makes your hearing loss more apparent than the largest hearing aid on the market.

Myth number two: "My hearing loss is normal for my age." There are many people in their 70's, 80's and 90's that do not have hearing loss that requires hearing help. And, there are many people in their 30's, 40's and 50's who do need hearing help. The aging process for hearing kicks-in in the mid-40's. Activities that you did as a child, teenager or young adult can affect the progression of hearing loss. Hearing loss is never "normal".

Myth number three: "Your hearing loss cannot be helped." This may have been true at one time, but certainly not in the 21st century. People with hearing loss in one ear, with a high pitched hearing loss or "nerve damage" can be helped as never before. Digital technology and miniaturization have provided solutions for many people who may have rejected amplification in the past.

The first step to hearing help is a complete audiological evaluation, not to measure hearing loss, but to evaluate hearing. If a hearing impairment is determined, there are options available to fit any hearing loss and lifestyle. Contact a Doctor of Audiology for a hearing evaluation.