

Pardon? Hearing Loss in Seniors

Imagine going through life constantly having to ask people to repeat themselves? This is the reality faced by thousands of Canadians, particularly seniors, who suffer from hearing loss.

The statistics are staggering. According to Health Canada, approximately 40% of the population over the age of 75 have a significant hearing problem. Hearing loss is identified as the third most prevalent chronic disability among older adults, superseded only by arthritis and hypertension.

Hearing loss associated with aging can be so gradual that those affected by it often aren't even aware that a problem exists. Many older people have no difficulty hearing lower pitched sounds, while sounds with a higher pitch can go undetected. Others, who hear most sounds distinctly, may be unaware of the sounds they are missing—attributing their hearing difficulties to other people not speaking clearly enough. Some basic warning signs to watch for include: speech and other sounds that seem faint, muffled, distorted, slurred or lack clarity; experiencing difficulty understanding someone speaking from a distance, conversing in areas with noisy backgrounds or understanding speech that others find clear.

The effects of undetected and untreated hearing problems can be very serious and our golden years should not be spent in a communications wasteland, shut off from what's happening around us. There's no reason why more elderly Canadians can't continue to enjoy engaging, productive and rewarding lives but to do so, they have to be able to hear. Detection and treatment is vital. If you suspect a hearing problem, act right away. An audiologist can determine the exact nature of a person's hearing difficulties, assess the severity of any hearing loss and then recommend treatment. Most importantly, remember this - it's never too early to be tested. The onset of adult hearing loss can occur as early as the third or fourth decade of life.

One in ten Canadians has a speech, language, or hearing disorder. If you suspect a problem, contact a professional. Check the yellow pages or visit our Web site www.caslpa.ca to find a speech-language pathologist or audiologist near you.

May is Speech & Hearing Month!

Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists -Caring About Communication!