

Beaulieu Hearing Center, Inc.

“Family Helping Families Hear Better”

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Don't Let Unaddressed Hearing Loss Spiral into Depression, BHI Cautions,

Urging Gen Xers and Baby Boomers to Get Their Hearing Checked

Washington, DC, October 5, 2013—If your quality of life, relationships, and emotional and mental wellbeing are important to you, then get your hearing checked, the [Better Hearing Institute](http://www.betterhearing.org) (BHI) is advising in recognition of [World Mental Health Day](#) and [National Depression Screening Day](#) on October 10th. Research shows that unaddressed hearing loss is associated with depression; but studies also show that people with hearing loss who use hearing aids often have fewer depressive symptoms, greater social engagement, and improved quality of life.

To help people determine if they need a comprehensive hearing test by a hearing healthcare professional, BHI is offering a free, quick, and confidential online hearing check at www.hearingcheck.org. Nearly 40 million Americans have some degree of hearing loss. Roughly 60 percent of them are in the workforce.

Note this Italian [study](#) that focused on Gen Xers and the youngest baby boomers. The researchers, who published their findings in *Acta Otorhinolaryngologica Italica*, explored the psychological and social profiles of working adults—35 to 55 years of age—with mild to moderate bilateral, sensorineural hearing loss due to presbycusis (commonly called age-related hearing loss). They found that the study participants with hearing loss were more prone to depression, anxiety, and interpersonal sensitivity than the participants with no hearing problems. None of the study participants used hearing aids.

BHI believes that these study findings underscore the importance of the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of mild-to-moderate hearing loss in the middle-aged population—particularly as people stay in the workforce longer and realize the benefits of active aging and healthy lifestyles.

Happiness and hearing aids: Is there a connection?

Perhaps.

In fact, a recent Italian [study](#) published in *Geriatrics & Gerontology International* concluded that the benefits of digital hearing aids in relation to depressive symptoms, general health and social interactivity,

but also in the caregiver-patient relationship, were clearly shown. In fact, reduction in depressive symptoms and improved quality of life at statistically significant levels were observed early on with the use of hearing aids.

This Italian study, in fact, echoes the general findings of [research](#) conducted more than two decades ago. A 1990 study—published by Cynthia D. Mulrow, MD, MSc, and co-investigators in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*—concluded that hearing loss is associated with important adverse effects on the quality of life of elderly persons—effects which are reversible with hearing aids.

For more information on [World Mental Health Day](#), visit the World Federation for Mental Health at www.wfmh.org. For more information on [National Depression Screening Day](#), visit www.mentalhealthscreening.org.

About Hearing Aids

Research shows that hearing loss is frequently associated with other physical, mental, and emotional health conditions, and that people who address their hearing loss often experience better quality of life. Eight out of 10 hearing aid users, in fact, say they're satisfied with the changes that have occurred in their lives specifically due to their hearing aids—from how they feel about themselves to the positive changes they see in their relationships, social interactions, and work lives.

When people with even mild hearing loss use hearing aids, they often improve their job performance; enhance their communication skills; increase their earnings potential; improve their professional and interpersonal relationships; stave off depression; gain an enhanced sense of control over their lives; and better their quality of life.

Here are five little-known facts about today's hearing aids:

1. [They're virtually invisible](#). Many of today's hearing aids sit discreetly and comfortably inside the ear canal, providing both natural sound quality, and discreet and easy use.
2. [They automatically adjust to all kinds of soundscapes](#). Recent technological advances with directional microphones have made hearing aids far more versatile than ever before—and in a broad range of sound environments.
3. [You can enjoy water sports and sweat while wearing them](#). Waterproof digital hearing aids have arrived. This feature is built into some newly designed hearing aids for those concerned about water, humidity, and dust. This feature suits the active lifestyles of swimmers, skiers, snowboarders, intensive sports enthusiasts and anyone working in dusty, demanding environments.
4. [They work with smartphones, home entertainment systems and other electronics](#). Wireless, digital hearing aids are now the norm. That means seamless connectivity—directly into your hearing aid(s) at volumes that are just right for you—from your smartphone, MP3 player, television and other high-tech gadgets.
5. [They're always at the ready](#). A new rechargeable feature on some newly designed hearing aids allows you to recharge your hearing aids every night, so they're ready in the morning. It's super convenient—and there's no more fumbling with small batteries.

For more information on hearing loss, visit www.BetterHearing.org. and www.beaulieuhearing.com