

# Sound BYTES

INFORMATION FOR YOUR EARS



## HEARING: IT'S A BRAIN THING

It is a common assumption that as people age, they begin to have memory problems. In order to combat this, many people try to be proactive by taking up activities such as crossword puzzles, sudoku or eating healthy. Current research shows a link between untreated hearing loss and an increased risk for cognitive decline as we age.

Individuals with hearing loss over the age of 60 have a 33% greater risk of dementia.<sup>2</sup> In Wisconsin, more than 15% of our population is over the age of 65;<sup>1</sup> this connection cannot be overlooked.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, one out of three people over the age of 65 have hearing loss. That number increases to two out of three individuals over the age of 75.<sup>3</sup> The greater degree or severity of hearing loss impacts the likelihood of dementia.

Those with mild hearing loss are nearly twice as likely to develop dementia compared to their counterparts with typical hearing. The risk increases threefold for those with moderate hearing loss, and five-fold for those with severe hearing loss. Researchers believe that this increased risk of dementia is due to the additional strain on the brain required to decode sounds. When sounds are misunderstood or not heard, the brain must work harder to interpret the message. Untreated hearing loss forces the brain to work harder to hear, which can take a toll on the brain and ultimately affect memory.

One common way to decrease this strain on the brain is through the use hearing aids. Hearing aids engage our sense of hearing and reduce the cognitive effort needed for processing sound. Therefore, hearing aid usage may help slow the rate of cognitive decline.

Engaging the brain through puzzles and healthy eating is a great way to keep your brain engaged and memory sharp. It is also important to have your hearing tested and treat hearing loss to help reduce the risk of memory loss and other cognitive issues.

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Wisconsin. (n.d.). Retrieved May 24, 2019, from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/WI/PST045218>

<sup>2</sup> Lin, F. R., Metter, E. J., O'Brien, R. J., Resnick, S. M., Zondermand, A. B., & Ferrucci, L. (2011). Hearing loss and incident dementia. *Archives of Neurology*, 68, 214–220.

<sup>3</sup> Quick Statistics About Hearing. (2018, October 05). Retrieved from <https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/statistics/quick-statistics-hearing>

<sup>4</sup> Pallarito, Karen. "Evidence for Connection Between Cognitive Decline and Hearing Loss Continues to Mount." *The Hearing Journal*, vol. 66, no. 3, 2013, pp. 36–38., doi:10.1097/01.hj.0000427534.71087.8d.

<sup>5</sup> Montano, Joseph J., and Jaclyn Barbara. Spitzer. *Adult Audiologic Rehabilitation*. Plural Pub., 2014.



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# TO RECHARGE OR NOT TO RECHARGE? THAT IS THE QUESTION

Do you get tired of changing your hearing aid batteries or always having to carry batteries with you in case the battery dies during the most inconvenient time? Rechargeable hearing aids may be the answer. Professional Hearing Services works with multiple manufacturers that have rechargeable options. Consumer reports indicates that rechargeability is the number one requested feature when it comes to hearing aids.

Rechargeable Batteries		Battery Operated Hearing Aids	
Pros	Cons	Pros	Cons
Easy to use (place HA's in charger)	3 hours to fully charged	Batteries are easily accessible (drug stores, online, and discount department stores)	Need to open and close battery door daily to turn the hearing aids on and off
No time spent changing batteries	Requires Charger for nightly charging	No charger needed (more convenient for those that travel or camp)	Replace batteries every 2-14 days depending on battery size
Charge will last all day (approximately 18 hours) <b>Estimated time without streaming</b>	Lithium-ion battery needs to be replaced every 2-4 years	Available in all sizes of hearing aids from completely-in-the-canal (CIC) to behind-the-ear (BTE)	Harder to use for those with dexterity and vision problems
Easier to use for those with dexterity problems, shaky hands, or vision problems	Only available in receiver-in-the-ear (RITE) and behind-the-ear (BTE) style HA's		

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