

THE LINK BETWEEN UNTREATED HEARING LOSS AND FALLS

Did you know that there is a link between untreated hearing loss and falls? Researchers at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine found that individuals with even mild degree of hearing loss were nearly three times more likely to have a history of falling as compared to individuals with normal range hearing. The risk of falling increased further for every additional 10 decibels of hearing loss measured in patients in this study.

People who cannot hear well may not have good awareness of their overall environment, resulting in increased tripping and falling. Additionally, hearing deficit increases cognitive load, overwhelming the brain with demands on its resources needed to maintain good balance.

The Doctors of Audiology at A&A Audiology are trained to evaluate your hearing and make recommendations to meet your hearing health needs. They understand the impact of hearing and balance disorders can have on quality of life. Hearing your best may help to give your brain all the resources it needs to help prevent you from tripping and falling.

References

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UNTREATED HEARING LOSS AND MEMORY DECLINE

Your hearing plays an important role in keeping your hearing and memory sharp. Below are key points related to hearing and brain function.

- Research shows people with hearing troubles feel isolated and unable to join in conversations as much as they would like, which can lead to **stress** for the individual and their communication partner/s.
- People with hearing loss have difficulty understanding what others are saying. Sensorineural hearing loss, the most common type of hearing loss in adults, is caused by damaged inner ear structures. These damaged structures send distorted signals to the brain, resulting in the brain needing to work harder to process the sounds heard unclearly. This increased listening effort can result in listening fatigue and **cognitive overload**.
- The ability to hear is important in helping you understand your surroundings. You may experience **anxiety** when you cannot hear a phone, siren, alarm, emergency call for help, or someone approaching you.
- People with hearing loss may have difficulty participating in conversations, which can lead to **depression**. Depression is linked with confusion and may contribute to short-term memory loss, increasing difficulty in making decisions and concentrating on tasks.



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PROFESSIONALS CARING FOR YOUR AUDIOVESTIBULAR HEALTH

Navigating the landscape of hearing and vestibular health can be challenging. Below is information about providers licensed in Arizona to dispense hearing aids to adults, their training, and scopes of practice.

Audiologists are health care professionals who evaluate, diagnose, treat, and manage patients with hearing loss, tinnitus, and vestibular (balance) disorders for all age groups.

- Audiologists have advanced levels of education and are required to have a Master's or Doctorate level degree.
- Graduate program areas of study include diagnosis and treatment of hearing loss and balance disorders, anatomy and physiology, normal and abnormal communication development, genetics, ethics, physics, pharmacology, infection control, cerumen management, electrophysiology and more.
- Audiologists must also complete many hours of supervised training during and after their graduate studies. They are trained to diagnose and treat all types of hearing loss, and to determine when a patient needs a medical referral.
- Audiologists are trained to counsel patients regarding type and degree of hearing loss, how hearing loss impacts daily communication, and communication strategies.
- Audiologists are trained to advise patients on the use of Assistive Listening Devices when hearing aids are not enough.



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Hearing Instrument Specialists/Hearing Aid Dispensers are not required to have the same high level of educational degrees as Audiologists and their scope of practice is limited to screening hearing for the purpose of fitting hearing aids in adults and fitting hearing aids to adult patients.

Both Audiologists and Hearing Instrument Specialists are required to take written and practical examinations to be licensed to dispense hearing aids in Arizona and must document and maintain continuing education requirements for license renewal, as specified by the Arizona Department of Health Services.

Our audiologists at **A&A Audiology** are doctorate level trained with experience in clinical, academic and manufacturing settings. Services are offered using state-of-the-art equipment, following clinical best practices, to assure the best outcomes to manage your hearing, tinnitus and vestibular needs.



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