



## **Summary from Kristine Jarrell, AuD. Dec. 11, 2025**

### **“Clear Hearing for Cognitive Health”**

#### **Hearing changes are common in aging populations:**

- In the US: Affects ~1 in 3 adults aged 65–74, and ~half of those 75+
- Proactive hearing care is essential

#### **Impacts of Untreated Hearing Loss**

##### **Emotional and Social:**

- Feelings of loneliness, exclusion, worry, sadness, irritability, or low confidence.
- Frustration from loved ones due to misunderstandings.
- Avoidance of social situations (self-isolation).
- Fatigue after conversations; preference for one-on-one interactions.
- Associated conditions: anxiety, depression, denial.

##### **Cognitive and Brain Health:**

- Brain overworks to compensate, reducing resources for memory/thinking.
- Untreated loss linked to faster cognitive decline and higher dementia risk.
- Treatment (e.g., devices) supports brain health, social engagement, and independence.

#### **Finding the Right Model**

- Full diagnostic evaluation; may require referrals (e.g., always for Medicare Parts A/B, VA; plan-specific for Part C).
- Audiologist-led; assesses medical flags; ongoing, relationship-based care.
- Retail Store (e.g., Costco):
- Basic test/fitting by specialist; no insurance/referrals needed.
- Lower prices via bulk/tech offerings; convenient trials, cleanings.

**Advice:** Match to needs—traditional for complexity, retail/online for simplicity/budget.

#### **Hearing Aids:**

**Can:** Amplify/clarify sounds; ease conversations; reduce effort; support engagement.

**Can't:** Restore perfect hearing; fully eliminate noise.

- Require ongoing care, consistent wear (not just "as needed") and accessories (e.g., for extra support) for hearing success
- Lifespan: Aids last ~3–5 years; coverage varies by insurance.

**Hearing loss isn't just auditory—it's a holistic health concern.**



Some general Indicators of hearing changes that were discussed are below Ask yourself the questions below and check those that apply.

**Are you:**

- Asking for repeats often. ("Could you say that again" "What did you say")
- Blaming mumbling or fast speech as a reason for not understanding
- Mishearing similar words
- Hearing voices but difficulty identifying all of the words (e.g.in a movie, restaurant)
- Showing inappropriate responses or reaction (i.e. thinking someone said 'you are a bore' instead of 'open the door')
- Heavy reliance on lipreading
- TV gets louder while someone in the next room tells you to turn it down
- Needing captions to understand/hear TV, feeling lost when not available
- Using high phone volumes (people in the next grocery aisle can hear)
- Unable to converse or hear in crowded restaurants, meetings, or gatherings
- Feeling exhausted from straining to understand speech
- Missing notifications (texts, rings, alarms)
- Missing pet communication (whine, barks)
- Not hearing doorbells, appliances, footsteps, or whispers.
- Experiencing delayed reactions to emergency response vehicles, disaster evacuation loudspeakers, equipment signals (beeps)



**Checking two or more may indicate it's time for your hearing evaluation.**