

suburbanlife

Through modern advancements in hearing device technology, **Pinnacle ENT Associates** helps hearing-impaired individuals stave off cognitive decline.

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Losing Your Hearing May Mean Losing Your Mind, Too

The good news: Modern advancements in hearing device technology may help hearing-impaired individuals stave off cognitive decline.

Unchecked hearing loss can lead to a host of mental health issues under the umbrella of cognitive decline.

Impaired hearing causes a withdrawal from social activities, leading to isolation, loneliness, anxiety, and paranoia. The more severe the hearing loss, the greater the risk of social and psychological conditions, including dementia.

Dementia specific, it's a complex disease with an otherwise straightforward set of mental processing problems. The National Institute on Aging defines dementia as, "The loss of cognitive functioning—thinking, remembering, and reasoning—and behavioral abilities to such an extent that it interferes with a person's daily life and activities."

Here's how it works: In the hearing process, our brains use our peripheral and central nervous systems to make sense of

competing sounds in our environment, assigning meaning to what might otherwise be considered background noise. When you suffer from hearing loss, your brain has a hard time doing this, leading to confusion and frustration—proof of the strong link between hearing and cognition.

So when your hearing is compromised, your cognitive system works harder to listen and process sounds, increasing your attention, boosting short-term memory, and tapping into previous experiences to help make sense of the world around you. Even so, your brain can work only so hard at this level before it affects your health.

This is what is known as "cognitive load." As your brain is working overtime to allocate the cognitive resources to make up for your hearing loss and decipher your environment, it's utilizing resources it would otherwise be using on retaining and forming new memories.

At least, this is what the scientific community generally agrees on as one of the main hard links between hearing loss and dementia.

The good news is that modern advancements in hearing device technology, already used in better hearing strategies, are equally effective in slowing down cognitive decline as they are in helping people with hearing loss.

In a recent study published in the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* involving more than 2,000 hearing device users, results showed that while episodic memory did decline with age for most users, the rate of cognitive decline was slower for patients who used hearing devices.

Researchers state that hearing aids provide individuals with improved auditory input, which delays cognitive decline, "by preventing the adverse effects of auditory deprivation or facilitating lower levels of depression symptoms, greater social engagement, and higher self-efficacy." ■

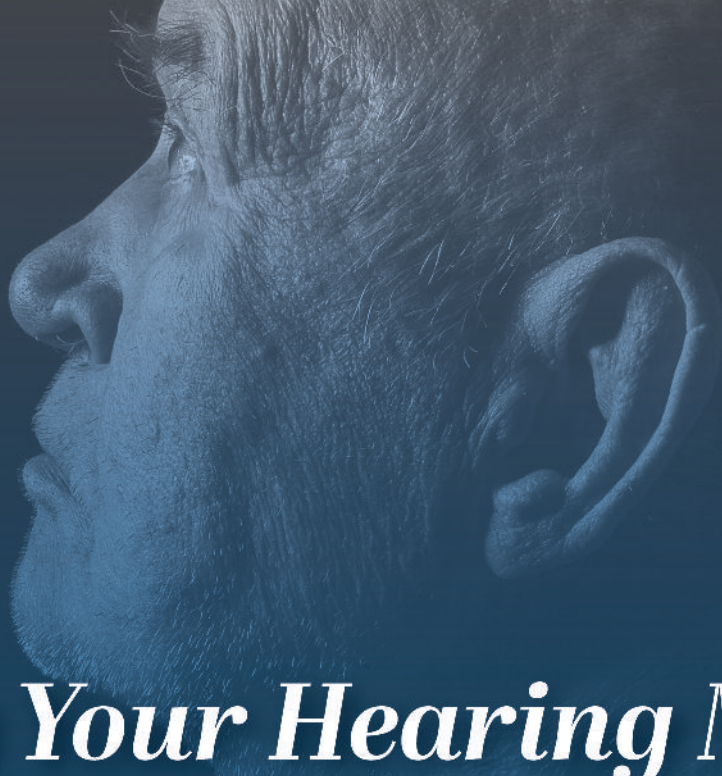
→ If you or a loved one is experiencing symptoms of hearing loss or cognitive decline, visit Pinnacle ENT Associates' website at www.pentadocs.com to request an appointment with one of our hearing healthcare professionals at one of our 13 convenient locations.*

**Due to COVID-19, audiological services may vary per location and per stay-at-home orders.*



Photograph courtesy of Pinnacle ENT Associates

Source: Maharani, A., Dawes, P. et al. (2018) Longitudinal relationship between hearing aid use and cognitive function in older Americans. *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*. Published online April 26.



Losing Your Hearing May Mean Losing Your Mind, Too

Did you know that hearing loss can have a direct impact on your mental capacity? In honor of Better Hearing & Speech Month, our dedicated audiologic team at Pinnacle ENT Associates is here to help raise awareness and find solutions around this important aspect of your health.

OUR TEAM CAN HELP.



Hearing Aid Evaluations



Hearing Aid Repairs



Hearing Aid Fittings



Full Audiological Evaluations

Visit www.pentadocs.com
to request a telemedicine
appointment today.*

**Due to COVID-19, audiological services may vary per location and per stay-at-home orders.*



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