

How hearing loss can impact brain health (Broadcast)

INTRO:

MANY PEOPLE ASSUME HEARING LOSS IS SIMPLY A NORMAL PART OF GETTING OLDER. WHILE AGE-RELATED HEARING LOSS IS COMMON... EXPERTS SAY IT'S NOT SOMETHING TO BE IGNORED.

TAKE VO

ACCORDING TO DR. EMILY COOPER... A CLINICAL AUDIOLOGIST WITH OSF HEALTHCARE ILLINOIS NEUROLOGICAL INSTITUTE... RESEARCHERS CONTINUE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HEARING LOSS AND DEMENTIA.

WHILE RESEARCHERS ARE STILL WORKING TO UNDERSTAND EXACTLY WHY HEARING LOSS AND DEMENTIA APPEAR TO BE CONNECTED... DR. COOPER EMPHASIZES THAT HEARING LOSS ALONE DOES NOT CAUSE DEMENTIA. INSTEAD... UNTREATED HEARING LOSS MAY CONTRIBUTE TO FACTORS THAT INCREASE THE RISK OF COGNITIVE DECLINE... OVER TIME. ONE POSSIBLE REASON IS THE IMPACT HEARING LOSS CAN HAVE ON A PERSON'S SOCIAL LIFE. PEOPLE WHO STRUGGLE TO HEAR... OFTEN WITHDRAW FROM CONVERSATIONS... SOCIAL GATHERINGS... AND ACTIVITIES THEY ONCE ENJOYED.

TAKE SOT | DR. EMILY COOPER | CLINICAL AUDIOLOGIST | OSF HEALTHCARE ILLINOIS NEUROLOGICAL INSTITUTE

"Your brain needs to be active and used," Dr. Cooper stresses. "Hearing loss also takes a lot of brain power. Your brain is having to do a lot more processing to understand the world." Over time, that increased effort may contribute to cognitive decline.

VO TAG

HEARING LOSS CAN DEVELOP GRADUALLY... MAKING IT DIFFICULT FOR PEOPLE TO RECOGNIZE WHEN THEIR HEARING HAS CHANGED. DR. COOPER SAYS SOME COMMON WARNING SIGNS INCLUDE TURNING UP THE TELEVISION LOUDER THAN USUAL... FREQUENTLY ASKING OTHERS TO REPEAT THEMSELVES... HAVING MORE DIFFICULTY HEARING IN NOISY ENVIRONMENTS... AND EXPERIENCING RINGING IN THE EARS.