



Why untreated hearing loss is bad for your brain

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Key points:

- Hearing loss causes auditory deprivation, a type of sensory impairment.
- If left untreated, it can lead to shrinkage in the parts of the brain that process sound.
- Hearing aids can reverse this process, but they are less effective if a person has had untreated hearing loss for a long time.

Auditory deprivation occurs when your brain is deprived of sound, such as from untreated hearing loss. Over time, your brain loses the ability to process sound. If left untreated, the parts of the brain normally responsible for hearing get "reassigned" to other tasks. Those parts also tend to shrink or atrophy. And it can affect anyone with hearing loss, not just severe cases.

"Auditory deprivation is when the brain has difficulty understanding and processing information due to the lack of stimulation," said audiologist [Jenilee P. Pulido](#), AuD, of HearCare Audiology Center Sarasota, Fla.

