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## Deaf and Hard of Hearing Myths and Realities

**Myth:** *All hearing losses are the same.*

Reality: The single term “hearing loss” covers a wide range of losses that have very different effects on a person’s ability to process sound and, therefore, to understand speech.

**Myth:** *Hearing loss cannot be prevented.*

Reality: Actually, most non-genetic hearing loss can be prevented. By limiting exposure to excessive noise, many people can prevent noise-related hearing loss. This doesn’t mean avoiding the rock concert or mowing the lawn, but rather allowing your ears 16 to 18 hours to recover from this type of exposure.

**Myth:** *Wearing a hearing aid is a sign you’re getting old.*

Reality: Although hearing loss is common in older adults, many middle-aged and younger people are affected as well. In fact, *The Canadian Hearing Society Awareness Survey* suggests that the average age of people reporting hearing loss is 51, with seven in ten under the age of 60.

**Myth:** *Deaf people can’t drive.*

Reality: Not only can deaf people drive, but statistics show that, per capita, deaf drivers have fewer accidents. This is largely because driving is a visual skill. Hearing drivers routinely mask outside noises and auditory clues by closing their windows, playing radios, CD players and cassette decks, or using cellular phones.

**Myth:** *People who are deaf or hard of hearing don’t fit into conventional workplaces.*

Reality: Individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing are intelligent and hard working. With the right accommodations in place they perform as well as hearing employees.