

# Better Hearing

Grand Rapids - Did you know that one in ten (28 million) Americans has hearing loss?

According to mmpc ENT physician, Keith Postma, MD, "The prevalence of hearing loss increases with age, up to 1 in 3 over age 65. Most hearing loss occurs over a period of 25 to 30 years. Among seniors, hearing loss is the third most prevalent but treatable disabling condition, behind arthritis and hypertension." Although hearing loss can be successfully treated with hearing aids, only 22% (6.35 million individuals) currently use them.

Are you aware that one third of hearing

loss is preventable with proper hearing protection?

If you work in an at-risk occupation (at-risk occupations include firefighters, police officers, factory workers, farmers, construction workers, military personnel, heavy industry workers, musicians, entertainment industry professionals), check with your employer to make sure you have adequately protected your hearing according to OSHA regulations.

Limit exposure time to noisy activities. Wear hearing protection, such as foam or silicone plugs or muffs. Foam plugs are available at your pharmacy while muffs and

specialized ear protection can be purchased at sporting good stores or safety equipment stores.

At home, turn down the volume on the television, radio, stereos and walkmans. Wear ear plugs or muffs when using loud equipment (i.e. lawn mowers, power saw, leaf blower). Buy quieter products (compare dB ratings – the smaller the better). Reduce the number of noisy appliances running at the same time in your personal environment. Avoid medications that can be dangerous to your hearing. Be sure to ask your physician about possible effects on your hearing.