



# Hearing & Brain Health

## Understanding the Link Between Hearing, Cognition and Healthy Ageing

Hearing plays an important role in how the brain processes information, communicates with others, and stays socially engaged.

In recent years, research has shown that hearing loss may be linked to changes in cognitive health, particularly when hearing difficulties remain untreated for long periods.

This does not mean hearing loss causes dementia, but it does highlight the importance of identifying and managing hearing changes early.

## Why Hearing Matters for Brain Health

Hearing is not just about the ears. It also involves complex processing in the brain. When hearing becomes more difficult, the brain must work harder to understand speech. This is known as listening effort.

Over time, increased listening effort may contribute to:

- Mental fatigue
- Reduced concentration
- Withdrawal from conversations
- Reduced social engagement

Social interaction and mental stimulation are important for maintaining healthy brain function throughout life.

## What Research Has Shown

Large population studies have found an association between untreated hearing loss and an increased risk of cognitive decline.

Researchers suggest several possible reasons:

- Increased listening effort
- Reduced stimulation of hearing areas of the brain
- Social withdrawal due to communication difficulties

Researchers now recognise hearing loss as one of the potentially modifiable risk factors associated with cognitive decline.





## Signs Hearing May Be Affecting Communication

- Difficulty following conversations in background noise
- Frequently asking people to repeat themselves
- Misunderstanding words
- Feeling tired after conversations
- Turning the television volume up louder than others prefer
- Family members often notice these changes first.

## How Hearing Care Can Help

Managing hearing changes may help reduce listening effort and improve communication.

- Hearing assessment and monitoring
- Communication strategies
- Hearing technology when appropriate
- Addressing ear or middle ear problems

Many people find that improving hearing clarity allows them to participate more comfortably in conversations and social activities.

## Our Approach at Holistic Hearing Solutions

- Understanding hearing and communication challenges
- Reducing listening effort
- Supporting long-term hearing health
- Helping people stay socially connected and confident

Comprehensive hearing assessments include speech-in-noise testing to understand Real-world listening challenges.

**Did you know?** Research published by the Lancet Commission on Dementia Prevention identified hearing loss as one of the potentially modifiable risk factors associated with cognitive decline.

