

According to the American Academy of Audiology, approximately 15% of American adults aged 18 and over (37.5 million people) report some trouble hearing. In an effort to provide access to care, your Meigs County Health Dept. (MCHD) recently began collaborating with Happy Ears Audiology, which is a family-owned mobile audiology clinic aimed at reducing barriers to care to bring the highest quality hearing care directly into Meigs County.

Did you know?

- In the U.S. more than half of people older than age 75 and one third of those ages 65 to 74 have a hearing loss.
- Hearing loss is the third most prevalent chronic health condition facing older adults.
- For every 10 dB decrease in hearing, there is a significant decrease in cognitive ability.
- Hearing aids show a significant benefit to individuals with hearing loss.
- About 80 percent of hearing loss cases can be treated with hearing aids, but only one in four individuals who could benefit actually use them.
- Hearing aid usage may offset cognitive decline from untreated hearing loss.
- Older adults who use hearing aids show reduced depression symptoms and improved quality of life.
- The risk of dementia may be up to five times greater and the risk of falling three times greater among people with untreated hearing loss.
- 90 percent of tinnitus, a variety of sounds such as ringing, hissing, roaring, pulsing, whooshing, chirping, whistling, or clicking, cases occur with an underlying hearing loss.
- Tinnitus repeatedly ranks as the number one disability among returning military service members, just ahead of hearing loss.
- 25 million American adults report experiencing tinnitus for five or more continuous minutes in the past year.
- There are no documented cures for tinnitus, but many treatments can help, including amplification to treat hearing loss.
- About 15% of US workers are exposed to hazardous noise levels annually.
- Nearly 50% of persons aged 12-35 years could be exposed to unsafe noise from personal listening devices, and 40% in this age group could be exposed to potentially damaging levels of sound at entertainment venues.

MYTH 1 - Hearing loss is a normal part of aging. FACT: There is no “normal” age-related hearing loss. Some individuals view hearing loss as “minor” and delay management of hearing loss because they think it’s “normal for their age.” The sooner a hearing evaluation is conducted, the easier the treatment and the better the results.

MYTH 2 – Hearing loss is always sudden so I will know when it is happening. FACT: Adult-onset hearing loss often occurs so gradually that it may be difficult to identify early signs that your

hearing is changing. In quiet situations, a person may experience no difficulty. Many individuals do not realize that their hearing can be better than it is.

**MYTH 3** - A hearing device is all that is needed to solve my hearing problems. **FACT:** Hearing aids are just one aspect of managing hearing loss. Audiologists frequently recommend aural rehabilitation or auditory training to maximize benefit from the device, as well as learning good communication strategies.

Potential risk factors for hearing loss include: Diabetes, High Blood Pressure, High Cholesterol, Heart/Vascular Disease, Sleep Apnea, and kidney disease while potential consequences of hearing loss including Depression, Anxiety, Cognitive Decline, Falls and other Unintentional Injuries.

Happy Ears Audiology Services include hearing tests, hearing aid services, earwax removal. According to Happy Ears, Dr. Gretchen Flinner is an expert in all hearing aid manufacturers and is happy to help you get the most out of your current devices. Happy Ears initial mobile visit to the MCHD was on Jan. 14, 2026. During the clinic, six residents (including two children) were served. Many said that they would not have had their hearing checked if the service had not been offered within the County.

Whether you are uninsured or concerned about the costs of services, Happy Ears Audiology offers affordable care plans based on household income. For more information, please visit [HappyEarsAudiology.org](http://HappyEarsAudiology.org) or call 740-538-0002.

Courtney Midkiff, BSC  
Administrator



#### Sources:

<https://www.audiology.org/consumers-and-patients/seniors-hearing-loss/>

Has hearing loss due to aging details, as well as hearing aid facts!

<https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/statistics/quick-statistics-hearing>

<https://hearinghealthfoundation.org/hearing-loss-tinnitus-statistics>