

# Your hearing is important to your health.

Your ears send sound and balance information to your brain. You may be at risk for other health issues if your ears are not working well. Hearing loss has been linked to health problems like depression and dementia.

## Clean Your Ears.

Did you know ear canals are self-cleaning? Earwax does not form or build up deep inside the ear canal. Using a cotton swab can actually hurt your ears. To clean your ears wash the visible parts with soap and water. Then use a towel to dry them.

## Reduce Extreme Noise.

Loud noises can cause serious damage to your eardrums. Many people use headphones or earbuds. It is important to keep volume low to prevent noise induced hearing loss. This is especially true with ear buds that go further into your ear. Wear earplugs if you are around loud noises for long periods.

## Keep Your Ears Healthy.

- Clean your ears safely and correctly
- Dry your ears after being in water
- Have your doctor check your ears
- Wear hearing protection in loud settings
- Turn down the volume when using headphones and earbuds

## Don't Ignore Hearing Loss.

If you have trouble hearing conversations and ask others to repeat what they said you may be experiencing gradual hearing loss. Have your Primary Care Provider (PCP) check your ears during your annual wellness exam. He or she can determine if you need further testing. If you experience ear pain or notice a change in your hearing contact your PCP as soon as possible.

