

Listen Up: How Your Ears Affect Your Balance and Safety

Did you know your ears help with more than just hearing? They also play a key role in keeping you steady on your feet. As we age, hearing changes are common — due to things like natural ear changes (yes, they really do get bigger!), long-term noise exposure, health conditions, or even certain medications.



Here are some signs it might be time to check your hearing:

- **Phone calls are hard to follow.**
- **Group conversations feel confusing.**
- You ask “**What?**” more often.
- **TV volume is always high** (and others notice).
- **Background noise makes conversations difficult.**
- People sound like they’re **mumbling**.
- **High-pitched voices** (like children’s) are harder to hear.

If these sound familiar, it may be time to talk to a professional. Taking care of your ears means more than hearing well — it’s a key part of staying safe, steady, connected, and confident every day!

Deep inside your ear is the vestibular system — your body’s built-in balance center. It works with your brain, eyes, joints, and muscles to keep you steady. When it’s off, even a little, it can lead to dizziness, unsteadiness, and a higher fall risk.

According to the Hearing Loss Association of America, most people with hearing loss wait **7 to 10 years** before getting help! That’s a long time to miss out on conversations, connections, and important sounds around you!



Hearing aids can help with hearing loss — and now you can get some over the counter, no prescription needed! While best for mild to moderate hearing loss, they’re a convenient and affordable option for many.

Noticing changes in your hearing?

Don’t ignore the signs — hearing loss can affect more than just conversations. It can impact your balance, safety, and confidence. Find out what you can do — including taking a quick online hearing test — at **FallsFreeWI.org/sound/**.

Take the first step toward clearer hearing and safer living today! Learn more at:

