

## **MEDICAL BREAKTHROUGHS** **RESEARCH SUMMARY**

TOPIC: NEWS ALERT: A MEDICATION THAT WILL REVERSE HEARING LOSS!  
REPORT: MB #4686

**BACKGROUND:** The loss of hearing that gradually occurs as we grow older is referred to as age-related hearing loss. Approximately one in three people in the U.S. between the ages of 65 and 74 has hearing loss, and nearly half of those older than 75 have difficulty hearing. Age-related hearing loss most often occurs in both ears, affecting them equally. Because the loss is gradual, if you have age-related hearing loss you may not realize that you've lost some of your ability to hear. The most common cause of age-related hearing loss arises from changes in the inner ear as we age, but it can also result from changes in the middle ear, or from complex changes along the nerve pathways from the ear to the brain. Certain medical conditions and medications may also play a role.

(Source: <https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/age-related-hearing-loss>)

**SYMPTOMS AND TREATMENT:** The most common symptoms of age-related hearing loss are the speech of others sounding mumbled or slurred; high-pitched sounds, such as "s" or "th" become hard to distinguish; conversations are difficult to understand, particularly when there is background noise; men's voices are easier to hear than women's; some sounds seem overly loud and annoying; and, tinnitus, or ringing in the ears, may occur in one or both ears.

Treatment options for age-related hearing loss may include hearing aids; assistive devices, such as telephone amplifiers or technology that converts speech to text; training in speech-reading (to use visual cues to determine what is being said); or even techniques for preventing excess wax in the outer ear.

(Source: <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/presbycusis>)

**HIGH-TECH ADVANCES:** With today's technology, solutions to hearing loss are being developed both within the ear and beyond the ear. From digital bluetooth-connected hearing aids that work with devices like televisions and other sound systems to stream audio to designs that fit invisibly in the ear canal, each can be programmed to the individual frequency needs of the listener. Robert Jackler, MD, the Edward C. and Amy S. Sewall Professor in Otorhinolaryngology, professor of neurosurgery and of surgery at Stanford says, "Wearing something on your ear will be a badge of technological prowess rather than a marker of age and infirmity." Another intervention that Jackler hopes will become a reality soon is a biological cure for hearing loss. Through the Stanford Initiative to Cure Hearing Loss, more than a hundred scientists and technicians are working to cure inner-ear hearing loss, the type that results from hair cell degeneration, which remains incurable today.

(Source: <https://stanmed.stanford.edu/listening/treatment-hearing-loss-cusp-transformation.html>)

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THIS REPORT, PLEASE CONTACT:**

***Althea Paul, Public Relations***

**813-974-0306**

**[altheapaul@usf.edu](mailto:altheapaul@usf.edu)**

**If this story or any other Ivanhoe story has impacted your life or prompted you or someone you know to seek or change treatments, please let us know by contacting Marjorie Bekaert Thomas at [mthomas@ivanhoe.com](mailto:mthomas@ivanhoe.com)**