

) tuned

# The Urgency of Prioritizing Hearing Health



Noise presents risks to hearing health in every workplace, not just factories or construction sites.

Many knowledge workers wear headphones all day, so noise exposure is a risk for everyone.

It's estimated that 50 million Americans have hearing issues, 60% of whom are of working age. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates<sup>1</sup> that more than 1 billion young adults are at risk of permanent, avoidable hearing loss due to unsafe listening habits.

Nearly one in four working-age adults in some sectors suffer from tinnitus, defined as persistent ringing or buzzing in the ears.

Tuned survey data shows as much as 43% of remote or hybrid workers report having tinnitus.

**50 million**

Americans have hearing issues

**60%**

are of working age



Hearing loss is the **third most common chronic physical condition**, twice as prevalent as diabetes, cancer, or vision loss. Yet 60% of noise-induced hearing loss cases are preventable.

Better education about hearing health is needed so people are more aware of the risks and can take appropriate precautions. Unfortunately, surveys have found low awareness of hearing risks<sup>2</sup> among concertgoers while about half<sup>3</sup> of workers routinely exposed to loud noises on the job say they don't wear protection.

Hearing issues like tinnitus, auditory processing disorders (APD) and the various forms of hearing loss carry a hefty cost: as much as \$981 billion globally in 2019<sup>4</sup>, nearly half of it related to poor quality of life. Yet, taking action can pay dividends. A 2022 study<sup>5</sup> published in The Lancet found that adopting the WHO's recommended hearing health interventions globally would produce \$2 trillion in improved productivity by 2030 and represent a nearly 15:1 return on investment.

3rd

most common chronic physical condition

2x

as prevalent as diabetes, cancer, or vision loss

60%

of noise-induced hearing loss cases are preventable.

Hearing issues like tinnitus, auditory processing disorder (APD) and the various forms of hearing loss carry a hefty cost: ***as much as \$981 billion globally***



## Hearing loss comorbidities

Like many disorders, hearing loss commonly occurs alongside other health disorders, making regular hearing evaluations a great way to identify problems early, when they're easier and less expensive to treat.

### Risk of falling

Less common inner-ear diseases affect the vestibular system, which controls balance. But even mild hearing loss increases the risk of falls, possibly because of a loss of spatial awareness.

### Heart disease

A healthy cardiovascular system is good for the auditory system since hearing depends on good blood flow. People with two or more risk factors for cardiovascular disease are significantly more likely to have hearing loss. Also, hearing loss often precedes clinical symptoms associated with cardiovascular conditions, making an annual hearing screening a great opportunity for early detection.

### Diabetes

High blood glucose levels can affect hearing and balance. Studies have shown that people with diabetes are about twice as likely to have hearing issues as non-diabetics.

### Cancer Treatments

Between 52% and 72% of cancer patients who received chemotherapy have measurable hearing loss<sup>6</sup>, and approximately 40% have tinnitus. Obtaining baseline hearing tests and monitoring for ototoxicity during and after treatments can help improve patients' quality of life.

### Autoimmune disorders

Rheumatoid arthritis, psoriatic arthritis, and gout have all been linked<sup>7</sup> to increased risk of hearing loss.

### Cognitive impairment or dementia

People who develop hearing issues in mid-life (ages 40–65) are at increased risk of developing dementia. Occupational noise exposure has been shown to hamper cognitive skills and hearing abilities, even in people with normal hearing.

### Depression

Hearing Impairment is strongly associated with depression in adults and higher use of mental health services. Hearing loss is also tied with feelings of loneliness, a condition the United States Surgeon General has identified as a public health crisis that raises the risks of mental health problems, heart disease, and premature death.



## A different kind of hearing benefit

Hearing benefits in commercial health insurance plans are typically limited to discounted hearing aids. They're also often manufacturer-specific, require sizable out-of-pocket costs from the employee and are oriented toward those with severe hearing loss.

There have been no options for preventive hearing care or solutions for mild to moderate hearing loss, tinnitus, APD, or other hearing complications. Major medical benefits may cover issues with the physical ear or surgical interventions, but not hearing conservation.

By contrast, Tuned offers a full spectrum of proactive hearing benefits that align with your key business initiatives:

- **Addresses a gap in healthcare**—Tuned offers solutions for mild to moderate hearing loss, education, and annual preventive care to help with hearing conservation.
- **Proactive prevention**—Getting an annual physical, vision, or dental exam is considered good health hygiene, so why not hearing? Tuned helps to avoid further costs resulting from hearing loss and its broader impact on health and productivity.
- **Address key healthcare cost drivers**—Considering hearing loss's many commodities, Tuned offers a way to identify other problems early when they're easier and less expensive to treat.
- **Reduce employees' financial burden**—Tuned has no out-of-pocket costs and saves employees needing a device thousands of dollars they otherwise couldn't afford. Plus, by offering education on ways to conserve their hearing and prevent loss, it prevents employers from incurring higher costs and negatively impacting employee productivity.
- **Supports employer of choice**—By offering innovative and proactive support for the health of one of our five senses, employers can differentiate themselves in the talent hunt and directly appeal to the headphone generation.
- **Aligns with DE&I initiatives**—Tuned is an inclusive benefit for employees and their families that addresses an invisible disability and offers accommodations for employees with hearing difficulties. It ensures everyone can operate at their peak.

---

With easy access to screenings and recommendations for both employee and employer, *Tuned can help employers increase productivity, create safer workplace environments, and provide a leg up in attracting top talent while closing a significant gap in care* - all at a cost that makes Tuned a 'no brainer' risk mitigation and employee retention strategy.



# Bibliography

1. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/deafness-and-hearing-loss#:~:text=Over%201%20billion%20young%20adults,and%20hearing%20care%20services%20globally.>
2. <https://musictech.com/news/industry/gigs-hearing-loss-damage-difficulties-live-shows-events/>
3. <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/noise/surveillance/overall.html#:~:text=About%2025%25%20of%20all%20workers,exposed%20in%20the%20last%20year.&text=53%25%20of%20noise%2Dexposed%20workers%20report%20not%20wearing%20hearing%20protection.>
4. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14992027.2021.1883197>
5. [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X\(21\)00447-2/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X(21)00447-2/fulltext)
6. <https://spcare.bmj.com/content/13/3/345>
7. <https://www.hearingtracker.com/opinion/inflammatory-arthritis-autoimmune-disease-and-hearing-loss?q=arthritis>

---

**Tuned delivers the only hearing health benefit beyond just discounted**

hearing aids. Tuned's telehealth platform offers clinical screenings, preventative and pediatric care, care for tinnitus, auditory processing disorder, mild-to-moderate hearing loss, and other conditions.

The care is coupled with traditional device options, vetted OTC products, software, OSHA screenings, and more, to deliver truly comprehensive hearing health care. Today over 1.4 million people have access to Tuned through their employee benefits. Tuned is a private company headquartered in New York City, with audiologists across the country and worldwide.

For more information visit:

**[WWW.TUNEDCARE.COM](http://WWW.TUNEDCARE.COM)**