



Opticians & Audiologists

PRESS RELEASE

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Eamonn Holmes reveals his hearing loss after learning its link to dementia

TELEVISION presenter Eamonn Holmes has opened up about wearing a hearing aid for the first time as he spoke out about the link between hearing loss and dementia during Dementia Action Week (21 – 27 May).

According to the Alzheimer's Society people with mild hearing loss are twice as likely to develop dementia, if you have a moderate hearing loss it rises to 3 times as likely and someone with a severe to profound loss are five times more likely.ⁱ

Eamonn has seen the devastating effects dementia can have – as his father-in-law suffered from the condition – so when he was recently informed by a Specsavers Audiologist that hearing loss could be an early detector for dementia he was shocked he hadn't known sooner.

'I had absolutely no idea hearing loss could be connected to dementia, anything that flags up a health condition such as dementia has to be taken seriously. Early intervention in so many conditions can either prevent a decline or preserve better health for longer.'

Chief Audiologist Gordon Harrison explains, 'It takes on average 10 years for someone to seek help for hearing loss, what many people don't realise is that a hearing test can flag up other health conditions.'

Gordon Harrison continues, 'There is a growing body of research that suggests hearing loss is a risk factor for dementia.'ⁱⁱ The studies further highlight the importance of looking after your hearing, and one of the reasons why regular hearing tests are essential. I look forward to seeing further research on what role managing age-related hearing loss could have on our overall health.'

During his visit to Specsavers Audiology, Eamonn was also given advice on how to best manage his own hearing loss. Eamonn now uses a hearing aid when required

and it has drastically improved the quality of his life. 'I no longer feel left out of simple things such as drinks in the pub or watching TV.'

He says: 'Without the hearing aid, I find it difficult to hear conversation in crowded surroundings such as parties and pubs. In those circumstances it is much more difficult to pick out speech from the background noise. I shy away from social gatherings, particularly parties, because there is only so many times you can say, "Pardon? What did you say?"'

His family life has also improved – it was his wife and children who noticed he had problems before he did. Eamonn says: 'As it would with anyone, often they are the first to know and the first to express frustration. So it can lead to tetchiness.'

'I always sense that they feel this should only be something happening to a 90-year-old. I think that's a common perception but one which needs to be changed because this can happen to so many people so much earlier in life, as I can testify.'

Experts recommend a hearing test every two years for those over 55 or for anyone with a hearing loss.

For more information or to book a free hearing test visit www.specsavers.co.uk/hearing. The Specsavers Hearing Check App is also free to download on the App and Play store on iOS or Android devices, and advises whether a full check in store is recommended.

-Ends-

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Notes to Editors

- Specsavers is a partnership of almost 2,000 locally-run businesses throughout the world – all committed to delivering high quality, affordable optical and hearing care in the communities they serve.

- Each store is part-owned and managed by its own joint venture partners, who are supported by key specialists in support offices.
- More than 36 million customers are registered with Specsavers and the partnership had a turnover of more than £2.2bn in 2016/17.
- More than one in three people who wear glasses in the UK buy them from Specsavers.
- Specsavers is a champion of the National Health Service – of its 22.2m customers in the UK, 55 per cent are from the NHS and the company is the largest provider of free NHS digital hearing aids.
- Specsavers supports several UK charities and is in partnership with RNIB for a public awareness campaign to transform the nation's eye health.
- Specsavers runs a home-visiting service in the UK and Ireland for those who cannot get to their local store unaccompanied.

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https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/news/article/302/study_confirms_the_link_between_hearing_loss_and_dementia_in_older_adults

ii <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3277836/>