

Audiology News

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration Issued a Landmark Proposal Intended to Improve Access to and Reduce the Cost of Hearing Aid Technology for Millions of Americans

The agency proposed a **rule** to establish a new category of over-the-counter (OTC) hearing aids. When finalized, the rule would allow hearing aids within this category to be sold directly to consumers in stores or online without a medical exam or a fitting by an audiologist. [You can read more about it here.](#)



Should Hearing Tests Become Mandatory? The UK Thinks So.

You know how important it is for people to get their hearing tested, particularly once they are over the age of 55. But a **February 2020 study** of 2,000 UK adults found that those over the age of 55 believed they should have their hearing checked every three years, yet the average amount of time since they last had their hearing tested was nine years.

The reality—based on recommendations from audiologists and hearing professionals—is that adults over the age of 55 should have their hearing tested every year. In fact, the British and Irish Hearing Instrument Manufacturers Association (BIHIMA) **is calling for mandatory annual hearing tests** for adults aged 55+.

While regular hearing tests are important at all ages, they become even more important as people age. Age-related hearing loss is one of the most common conditions affecting older adults. Approximately **one in three** people in the United States between the ages of 65 and 74 has hearing loss, and **nearly half** of adults over the age of 75 have difficulty hearing. This means that as people approach the age where hearing loss commonly occurs, it is essential to have their hearing regularly tested so they can receive the treatment they need.

Some professionals believe that even 55 is too late to start annual hearing testing. Almost 30% of British and Irish audiologists surveyed by BIHIMA in **December 2020** said that they recommended adults begin annual hearing tests before the age of 55. Regular hearing tests are important because your hearing affects your daily life—including personal relationships, social life, career, and simple joys of life like listening to music or the sounds of nature. In addition, untreated hearing loss has been linked to a greater risk of other serious conditions, including **depression, social isolation and loneliness, anxiety, falls, and dementia**.

Based on the studies and work done by the British and Irish Hearing Instrument Manufacturers Association, annual hearing tests over the age of 55 might become mandatory soon in the United Kingdom. Although it doesn't look like annual hearing tests will become mandatory in the United States in the immediate future, it does show that hearing loss is becoming a more recognized health concern.

