

Ask the Audiologist

Q: I know that aging, genetics, infections and noise exposure can all play a part in causing hearing loss or making it worse. But are there other things I should be aware of for me and my family?

A: Yes, and it might be something that is right there in your medicine cabinet. The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) says there are more than 200 medications that have been identified as ototoxic, or toxic to the ear.

Over the counter products have been linked to hearing loss and tinnitus. Aspirin and other pain relievers are in this group. So if you are taking an over the counter pain reliever and your hearing worsens or you start having tinnitus or it increases, call your physician regarding discontinuing it.

Caffeine, nicotine and alcohol may also be ototoxic if consumed in large quantities. Remember that colas have a large quantity of caffeine, as do most energy drinks. Tea and coffee (even decaffeinated) can increase your tinnitus if consumed in large quantities.

Common symptoms of ototoxicity include hearing loss, vertigo, and tinnitus. The symptoms can develop immediately or occur weeks following exposure. Sometimes the symptoms can improve when you stop taking the medication. Remember young children, including unborn children in utero, and the elderly are most susceptible to damage from ototoxic medications.

If you are prescribed a new medication by your doctor, or if you begin to use a new over the counter medication, be sure to read the information on side effects and contradictions. If you are prescribed an ototoxic medication, your doctor should order routine hearing tests, and if you or a loved one are undergoing chemo therapy, monitoring of your hearing should be done. If you have more questions regarding medications and symptoms of ototoxicity, please schedule a hearing test and a consultation.

WHAT'S NEW *in Technology?*

ReSound LiNX²

The Latest in Smart Hearing

The new ReSound LiNX2 will allow you to discover the benefits of smart hearing that adapts to you and your lifestyle.

With this new technology you will experience a vivid sense of space and speech. The new Binaural Directionality™ II with Spatial Sense™ supports your brain's natural ability to process sounds, enabling you to hear with less effort. Spatial Sense give you a natural sense of where sounds are coming from and helps to form a detailed sound picture of your surroundings. And, in a noisy listening situation, Binaural Directionality II makes sure you can still understand every word of the conversation.



There is a smart hearing aid for you

ReSound smart hearing aids use smart technology to help you connect to the world around you, adapting to your life and your needs.

Smart Audiology

Sound is their science, nature their inspiration and Surround Sound by ReSound® is the name they have chosen for their unique sound processing philosophy.

Smart Connectivity

Their goal is to remove the barrier that has arisen in our modern era where so many sounds and communication come from a distance (mainly via electronic devices) instead of from people close to you. We can help you stream all the sound that matters. With Made for iPhone capabilities and ReSound Unite™ accessories, we can, in some cases, even give you hearing advantages over people without hearing loss.

Smart Apps

Apps make technology human, and belong in our private sphere. We think there is no better use for an app than to simply and intuitively interact with the hearing aid responsible to enhance one of our most fundamental senses – our hearing.

Look to the Future

Call us today to hear the future...The ReSound LiNX² offers an effortless, intuitive, and discreet hearing experience to support you: your lifestyle, your terms, in your unique listening environment. ***We want you to hear more out of life.***

Call **517-323-6222** for a demonstration.

My What Big Ears You Have!

It is true... the older you get the bigger your ears. Some researchers say it could mean that bigger ears predict survival.

Researchers at the Veterans Administration found that ear circumference increases about 0.51 millimeters per year. Studies in the UK found similar results, and a Japanese doctor found that ear length correlates significantly with age.

Researchers at the University of Milan found evidence that not only do ears get longer with age, but this phenomenon applies to both men and women.

A professor at the University of Cambridge, in the UK says that ear size and pattern may be a marker of some biological process related to health.

Listen Carefully Protect Your Hearing

- Turn down the volume on your headphones.
- Use earplugs at concerts or around other loud noises.
- Download the Listen Carefully app to measure noise levels around you.

Cotton Swabs – Think Again!

1. **Cotton swabs push earwax deep into your ear canal and cause plugs.** Earwax buildup can cause itchiness, dizziness, pain and ringing in the ears.
2. **They can puncture your eardrum.** 1 in 2000 pediatric office visits and three in 1000 ENT visits are solely for cotton-tipped swab related injuries. Serious damage to the middle ear can happen, especially if someone is nudged while swabbing.
3. **They cause more itchiness than relief.** They cause more dryness to the ear, therefore more itchiness.
4. **Not eco-friendly.** 2.5 billion cotton swabs are produced each year and have been around for 90+ years, so imagine how many were used and thrown away since their invention.

Tips for Your Trip

Summer may finally be here and that means vacation could be just around the corner.

Before you go...

The Americans with Disabilities Act requires hotels to have rooms with special devices for those with hearing loss, so check what accommodations are available. If you are flying, make sure you let the flight attendants know you have a hearing loss, and to make sure you hear and understand any special instructions during the flight.

The cornerstone of Audiology & Hearing Service's customer service is the follow-up you receive once fit with your hearing aids. This follow-up includes regular cleaning and checks of your technology. We suggest getting your hearing aids cleaned before you go on vacation. If you don't have a dehumidifier (Dry and Store or Zephyr) now is the time to buy one. They remove moisture, dry out wax, kill germs, and deodorize your hearing aids in as little as one and a half hours. They will keep your instruments safe and in tip-top shape.

Be sure to pack extra batteries, and if you are going to a beach or will be around a pool, you may want to get "rain coats" for your hearing aids or a sports clip so you don't lose them.

Don't forget...

- to keep your hearing aids out of the sun. NEVER leave them in a hot car or on your lounge chair or beach blanket while sun bathing.
- to turn off your hearing aids when not using them.
- to replace dead batteries as soon as they die.
- to make others aware you are wearing electronic devices so they won't purposely push you in the pool or overboard.

Contact us about getting your hearing aids cleaned and checked and we will make sure they are operating at peak performance for your summer vacation. If you think your hearing has changed, schedule a hearing test so we can reprogram your hearing aids to best meet your needs. Have a fun, safe summer vacation!

The More the Merrier

Remember that phrase? Well it applies to your hearing also. Two ears are better than one. God gave us two ears for many reasons.

Localization: Listening with two ears helps with localization, or the ability to tell where a sound is originating. With just one ear you have no idea where a sound is coming from and this can lead to confusion and even danger.

Better Speech Understanding: Research shows that speech is much easier to understand when hearing aids are worn in both ears. You are better able to separate speech from noise when both ears are working. You can also hear soft speech and whispers.

Loudness: Listening with two ears provides an additional six decibels of sound, so your hearing aids don't have to be turned up as loud. Therefore, loud sounds won't cause as much discomfort.

Balance: Two ears working together improve your balance. We have had many patients tell us that when they try just one aid they feel so off balance.

If you are currently using just one hearing aid, call Audiology & Hearing Services and discover the benefits of binaural hearing. We provide a 60 day trial so you can evaluate the many benefits of hearing with two ears!



Living with Someone with Hearing Loss?

It is hard to explain to normal hearing people what it is like to have hearing loss. It is an invisible disability that is too often misunderstood, ignored or criticized. Hearing loss has a huge impact on the lives of those with the loss and those who live, work or socialize with them. Below are five things that hearing impaired people have shared with us, that they wished everyone knew about hearing loss.

1. **Hearing Loss is Exhausting.** When you can't hear well, listening takes work. This is hard for those with normal hearing to understand since hearing is so automatic for them.



The best way to explain this is with a game board from Wheel of Fortune. Some of the letters are filled in, others are blank. The contestant (or the listener) is trying to make sense of the assorted and incomplete sounds they hear and turn these sounds into words or phrases that make sense in the context of the conversation. It is hard because the conversation is continuing, and the hearing impaired person is always working to hear and understand and keep up.

2. **They are not stupid or rude.** They might answer questions inappropriately or miss the point of the conversation now and then, but they are not stupid. They just misheard what you said. If they don't respond to your greeting or say, "excuse me," it is not because they are ignoring you, they just didn't hear you.
3. **Hearing aids don't work like glasses.** Glasses transform blurry images into something crisp and clear, restoring your vision to normal. Hearing aids amplify sounds, but this only makes them louder, not necessarily crisper or clearer. Hearing aids also have trouble differentiating between sounds so that background noises are amplified along with speech. Newer technology has made great improvements in this area, but they still aren't perfect.
4. **You do not need to speak for me.** They are not children or invalids. If someone asks a question and they don't hear it, please repeat or rephrase the question so the person with the loss can answer it. When you answer for them, they feel demeaned or insulted.
5. **A few simple tricks can help a lot.** Face the person when talking to him or her and make sure he or she can see your lips. We all lip read and it is much easier to "hear when you can see." Don't talk to them from another room and always get their attention before speaking to them. They do want to hear and you can do your part to help.

10 Totally Unrelated Facts:

1. By age 70, one in 20 people will have mild cognitive impairment, and one in 10 will have dementia. People with hearing loss left untreated are at an even higher risk of cognitive decline.
2. The man who wrote "Take Me Out to The Ball Game" had never been to a ball game previously.
3. 30 million U.S. workers are exposed to hazardous noise levels.
4. Babe Ruth wore number three because he batted third.
5. The most quiet square inch in America is in Olympic National Park, Washington.
6. 45% of Americans don't know how long it takes the earth to revolve around the sun.
7. Only one in five Americans can identify the three branches of government.
8. Hearing impairment and tinnitus are more likely to occur in Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans than post traumatic stress syndrome.
9. You can buy a flag that has flown over the U.S. Capitol. Just send a letter to your Congress person.
10. One in five Americans over age 12 has hearing loss in at least one ear. This number is expected to double by 2030.

"You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream."

– C.S. Lewis

You Think English Is Easy?

- The soldier decided to desert his dessert in the desert.
- I do not object to the object.
- The insurance was invalid for the invalid.
- They were too close to the door to close it.
- The wind was too strong to wind the sail.

I am at that delusional age where I think everyone my age looks way older than I do.

Did you Hear the One About...

A man meets with his minister because he has been having frequent thoughts about the hereafter.

The minister asks him how often he thinks about it and he replies, "All of the time!"

The minister asks for more specifics.

The man says that several times a day he goes into a room and asks himself, "What the heck am I here after."

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"What's wrong Bubba?" asked the pastor.

"I need you to pray for my hearing," said Bubba.

The pastor put his hands on Bubba's ears and prayed. When he was done, he asked, "So how's your hearing?"

"I don't know," said Bubba. "It isn't until next Tuesday."

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A vain man walks into an audiologist's office and says, "I want the smallest cheapest hearing aid you've got." The audiologist introduces him to Willy, saying "Meet Willy, he will repeat everything anyone says to you."

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Hidden Toxins May Cause or Worsen Tinnitus

Certain food additives can be toxic to the nervous system. These additives are called neurotoxins and can damage nerve cells or neurons in the brain and the peripheral nervous system. They may cause or worsen diseases and degenerative conditions, including tinnitus. They are found in many popular foods and drinks. Aspartame and monosodium glutamate (MSG) are neurotoxins. Their destructive effects include damaging the auditory cortex, where sound is processed.

Aspartame is the key ingredient in the artificial sweeteners NutraSweet, Equal, and Spoonful. Clinical studies have called aspartame a “highly hazardous compound.” It can be found in everything from chewing gum, cold breakfast cereals, gelatins, puddings, to sugar-free carbonated beverages (soda pop).

MSG is added to many processed foods. It is best known for the “Chinese Restaurant Syndrome.” However it is added to many foods including baby food, but it is not always recognizable because they have developed compounds that contain MSG but are called something else.

If you have tinnitus or it has gotten worse, check your diet and the labels on the foods you are eating. Eliminating neurotoxins from your diet might help reduce your tinnitus.



6 Ways Hearing Aids can Improve Your Quality of Life



1. **Enjoy financial benefits:** Using hearing aids reduces the risk of income loss, research shows.
2. **Keep mentally fit:** Experts believe using hearing aids may slow cognitive decline tied to hearing loss.
3. **Stay on your feet:** People with even just a mild hearing loss were nearly three times more likely to have a history of falling, a Johns Hopkins study found.
4. **Boost confidence:** Many people with hearing difficulty feel more confident and better about themselves due to using hearing aids, research shows.
5. **Relieve tinnitus:** Hearing aids can help tame that ringing in your ears by amplifying background sound.
6. **Love more:** Using hearing aids often has a positive effect on relationships at home and work, studies confirm.

(Source: The Better Hearing Institute at www.BetterHearing.org)