



Associated Hearing PROFESSIONALS

Margaret Fritsch Juelich AuD
Tina McWhorter MA
Lesley Schopper

The “Hearing Bone’s” Connected to What?

**TIS THE
SEASON!!!**

**ENJOY THE
SOUNDS!!!**



At Associated Hearing Professionals, we say “Improve your hearing! Improve your health! Improve your happiness!”

Studies continue to show that **hearing is connected to other health conditions and that patients who treat their hearing loss are happier, have fewer depressive symptoms, greater social engagement, and improved quality of life.**

Once upon a time, before people knew any better, they thought that hearing loss was simply a part of growing older—something not worth doing much about. They were wrong.

Turns out, hearing loss isn’t fussy about age. More than half of us with hearing loss are still in the workforce. And hearing loss is a much bigger deal than we ever imagined. We need to take it seriously.

As one of the most common chronic health conditions in the United States today, hearing loss affects baby boomers, Gen Xers and every other age group. And, **when left undressed, hearing loss affects just about every aspect of a person’s life.**

The big surprise is that hearing loss has been linked to other health conditions.

Hearing loss can have unwelcome companions—like heart disease; diabetes; chronic kidney disease;

depression; cognitive decline, dementia or Alzheimer’s disease; increased risk of falling; increased hospitalizations.

In fact, as studies on the link between hearing loss and other health conditions mount, we’ve begun to see how our ears—and specifically how our hearing—connect to our whole body and health.

Here’s what we know:

The very best thing to do for hearing loss is to find out if you have it as soon as possible. Then take it seriously. If deemed appropriate by a qualified hearing health care professional, treat it. Hearing aids can benefit the vast majority of people with hearing loss.

Cardiovascular and hearing health are connected. Studies show that a healthy cardiovascular system positively affects hearing. Conversely, inadequate blood flow and trauma to the blood vessels of the inner ear can contribute to hearing loss. Some experts even believe that because the inner ear is so sensitive to blood flow, it is possible that abnormalities in the cardiovascular system could be noted here earlier than in other less sensitive parts of the body—making the ear a kind of “window to the heart.”

People with diabetes are about twice as likely to have hearing loss as

those without it.

Recent studies show a link between hearing loss and dementia, leading many experts to stress the importance of addressing hearing loss. One study found that seniors with hearing loss are significantly more likely to develop dementia over time than those who retain their hearing. Another found that hearing loss is associated with accelerated cognitive decline in older adults, and that those with hearing loss are more likely to develop problems thinking and remembering than older adults whose hearing is normal.

People who don’t address hearing loss are more prone to depression. Fortunately, studies show that people with hearing loss who use hearing aids often have fewer depressive symptoms, greater social engagement, and improved quality of life.

Hearing loss is tied to a three-fold risk of falling. One study found that even people with mild hearing loss were nearly three times more likely to have a history of falling.

A study of older adults showed that **those with moderate chronic kidney disease had a higher prevalence of hearing loss** than those of the same age without the disease.

Hospitalization is more likely for older adults

with hearing loss than for their peers with normal hearing, according to a study by experts at Johns Hopkins.

A 2013-published study found that older men with hearing loss had a greater risk of dying, particularly from cardiovascular causes. But men and women who used hearing aids—even though they were older and had more severe hearing loss—had a significantly lower mortality risk than those with hearing loss who did not use hearing aids.

Most doctors don’t include hearing health as a routine part of annual exams. So ask to have your hearing tested. Once you reach middle age, it makes sense to include hearing tests as part of your routine annual care.

It seems that **the “hearing bone” may be connected to more than we originally thought.**

So the next time you think you might be having trouble hearing something, listen to your ears.

They may be telling you something.

For more information on hearing loss, visit www.betterhearing.org

Remember, holiday gifts are available here, including, custom earmolds for hunters and musicians, battery testers, amplified telephones, amplified and vibrating alarms, Bluetooth compatible accessories, and gift certificates. Just call with any questions!



We Love to Talk!

Tina gave a well-received presentation at the Missouri Academy of Audiology annual convention in September. The topic was "Muckle-Wells Syndrome: A Family Affair" about a genetic syndrome that has hearing loss among its symptoms. Our practice has evaluated nine members of an extended family affected by Muckle-Wells Syndrome. The talk served as a reminder for clinicians to be mindful of referring for genetic evaluation in situations of hereditary hearing loss, as treatment can greatly improve quality of life.



Margaret and Tina exhibited at the Better Living EXPO in Chesterfield in October. Over 1000 people of all ages attended the event, which featured resources and information from a broad range of providers. We were happy to have the opportunity to answer questions about hearing, tinnitus, and amplification options. We provided current information to the general public and gave attendees the chance to "look in their own ears", making appropriate referrals when indicated.

In November, Margaret and Tina spoke to the audiology graduate students at Washington University School of Medicine about career opportunities in the field. The students had great questions about preparing for life after graduation, various workplace settings, private practice pros and cons, and careers on the industry side of hearing healthcare. We always feel that it is an honor to contribute to the education of students. They help us as much as we help them!

Thank you!

It is so true that the highest compliment we could ever receive is your recommendation of our practice. Thank you for entrusting us with not only your hearing healthcare, but also with that of your family, friends, and co-workers. We always try to exceed your highest expectations! Please invite anyone you know to our open house on December 9-10!

Little of This...Little of That...

Phonak has recently introduced even more options for Bluetooth connectivity and improving hearing in difficult listening situations. Ask us about the "Roger" pen, the next time you are in.

Starkey has an app for cell phones and Ipad's for individuals with hearing loss to practice listening in difficulty situations. Tasks like the ones in this game have been shown to help improve listening

ability in noise. The app is called "Hear Coach" and is available for free to anyone, not just Starkey hearing aid users.

As a reminder, please try to come to the office with the wax cleaned out of your ears. There are over-the-counter products available to help you if you need them; remember to keep Q-tips out of your ears! We are able to clean ears here, but there is a charge,

and insurance companies will not reimburse for the service unless provided by a physician. Please contact the office with any questions.

You might be an audiologist if ...you have an urge to properly insert someone's hearing aids when you're standing behind them in line at the grocery store.

Student Update

Krysta Gasser Rutledge is a second year audiology doctoral student at Washington University School of Medicine. Born and raised in Edwardsville, IL, she completed her Honors BA in Communication Science and Disorders at Saint Louis University in 2012.

Krysta is involved in several activities, including training with The Big Muddy Dance Company,

teaching Pilates, working at Banana Republic, conducting newborn hearing screenings at Missouri Baptist, working as a teaching assistant, collaborating at Saint Louis University School of Medicine on a manuscript investigating the effects of radiation upon hearing sensitivity, and serving on the education committee for her school's Student Academy of Audiology. In her spare time, she loves being with her husband!

Krysta has immensely enjoyed getting to know the wonderful patients here at AHP, and they have given her much inspiration! She hopes to help patients through a research career.



Flex spending!

Remember to use your flexible spending account before the end of the year. Call now to schedule an appointment so you can use those funds. before it's too late!