

Associated Hearing PROFESSIONALS



Advice for Choosing a Hearing Aid that Best Fits your Lifestyle

Hearing problems are one of the most common health-related issues in America.

Once you decide to do something about your hearing, how should you proceed? Here are some suggestions for choosing hearing aids that best fit your lifestyle:

Do see a licensed audiologist. You should expect the audiologist to make individualized recommendations based upon your hearing loss, lifestyle, and budget.

Do consider the style. Are you physically active or concerned about cosmetics? Do you have trouble manipulating small parts? Depending upon several factors, the audiologist will recommend a style that is best for you.

Do know what you want to hear and the situations you are in. These will determine the features that would benefit you the most. Are you very active? Do you participate in outdoor activities? Do you visit noisy restaurants? Do you enjoy live theatre and music? Do you travel? Do you attend meetings and lectures? Do you use the phone often? Knowing your communication needs will help the audiologist make recommendations about features such as Bluetooth compatibility, directional microphones, automatic programs for different environments, rechargeabil-

ity, etc.

Do think ahead. Even if you don't need a specific feature right now, think ahead to any anticipated changes in your lifestyle. Are you planning to retire soon? Will you be moving to somewhere that offers meals in a large dining area? Will you be volunteering? Forecasting changes in your lifestyle will enable your audiologist to discuss options for flexibility down the road.

Do your research. Check out the experience of the audiologist, what to expect from hearing aids, and what is included with your purchase. Researching specific brands and features is fine, keeping in mind that not everything will be appropriate for you.

Don't believe all advertisements. Remember the adage "If it sounds too good to be true..."Hearing aids will not eliminate all background noise or restore normal hearing. Beware of ads stating that technology is available only at certain locations. Do not choose a hearing healthcare provider because of an incentive for a free gas card. If an ad lists prices, be sure to compare apples to apples and be wary of bait and switch.

Do not feel pressured to purchase devices or to go beyond your

budget. When you decide to move forward, remember you are investing in yourself; it's not just your hearing, it's your life.

Do not purchase hearing aids online. Hearing aids are medical devices, and hearing loss is associated with many medical conditions including cardiovascular disease, diabetes and dementia. Besides the physical fit, devices need to be programmed and fine-tuned for you to achieve maximum benefit. You should be taught to use and care for the instruments properly, and receive follow-up care.

Do not go alone. It is always a good idea to have someone else with you to help take notes and ask questions. A familiar voice will be helpful when the hearing aids are programmed.

Do not put it off. It takes on average five to seven years for patients to do something about their hearing loss. The longer you wait, the longer it takes for your

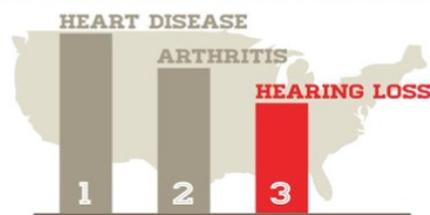
brain to adjust to the new sound. When left untreated, hearing loss may affect almost every facet of your life. Why not see what you have to gain instead?

Hearing loss impacts your entire life, including your relationships, career, and activities. **Once you make a decision to do something about your hearing, take measures to ensure that you choose the hearing aids that best fit your lifestyle. Follow these suggestions; take control of your hearing health and enjoy life more!**



If you have a family member who would like an orientation regarding how to clean your hearing aids, change wax traps, and batteries, just call the office and set it up with Lesley or Kathy. Healthy hearing aids means happy hearing!

HEARING LOSS IS THE THIRD MOST COMMON HEALTH PROBLEM IN THE UNITED STATES.



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Remember to Keep Anything Smaller than Your Elbow out of Your Ears

The American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery (AAO-HNS) recently issued updated guidelines for patients regarding managing earwax and healthy ear care.

Earwax, called cerumen, is actually protective and is produced by glands in the ear canals. It prevents dirt and dust from getting into our ears, guards against bacteria, and lubricates the ear canals. Hearing aid wearers some-

times have issues with too much cerumen because the wax may have a more difficult time leaving the ear naturally.

Putting anything into your ears in an attempt to remove wax is dangerous. People have injured themselves using Q-tips, bobby pins, keys and other items. These objects can not only push the wax in further and damage the eardrum they can also scratch the ear canal. This could lead not only to pain, but infection as

well. Ear candles are especially dangerous.

Some people produce more wax than others. Too much cerumen could cause a buildup that results in ear pain, tinnitus, a feeling of fullness, and hearing loss.

Over the counter products can be used at home to help remove excessive earwax, assuming there is not a perforation in the eardrum.

Whenever you are in the office, we will look in your ears. If there is cerumen that needs to be removed, we are able to do that in the office. If needed, we will refer you to a medical doctor.

Give us a call if you have any questions, and remember to keep anything smaller than your elbow out of your ears!

February is Heart Month

There is an expression that “the ear may be the window to the heart”. Since February is American Heart Month, it is also a great time to take care of both.

Research suggests that hearing loss may be an early sign of cardiovascular disease. According to one scientist, the reason could be because “the ear is so sensitive to blood flow that it is possible that abnormalities in the cardiovas-

cular system could be noted hear earlier than in other less sensitive parts of the body.”

The Better Hearing Institute (BHI) recently listed five random things your heart and ears have in common:

1. People with both heart disease and hearing loss have a higher risk of **depression**. Research does show that people with hearing loss who use hearing aids are more engaged

in life and optimistic.

2. **Exercise** benefits both your heart and ears. In women, a higher level of physical exercise is linked to a lower risk of hearing loss according to one study.

3. **Smoking** is bad for your heart and your ears.

4. Both your ears and your heart love **omega-3 fatty acids**.

5. Not only does **obesity** put people at risk for heart disease, it also affects hearing. Several studies have shown a link between obesity and hearing loss.

Washington University Students



Charlotte Dutcher is finishing the third year of her Audiology Doctoral Degree at Washington University School of Medicine. She is currently doing research with the vice-chair of ENT, Dr. Joel Goebel,

and the Dizziness and Balance Center at Washington University. Her research is on optimizing the clinical protocol for the Gaze Stabilization balance test. This summer, she will move to Columbia, Missouri to begin her fourth year externship at the Harry S. Truman VA Medical Center.



Katie Hylton is a third year Doctor of Audiology student at Washington University School of Medicine. She received her B.S. in Communication Sciences and Disorders from the University of Georgia. She thoroughly enjoyed building relationships with the friendly patients at Associated Hearing Professionals. She would like to thank AHP for such a memorable summer rotation.

As a north Georgia native,

Katie enjoys outdoor activities including hiking, kayaking, and camping. In her spare time, Katie enjoys learning new recipes, being crafty, and exploring everything St. Louis has to offer.

She is excited to begin her fourth year externship at the University of Colorado Hospital in Denver. Katie looks forward to working with adult and pediatric patients in her future career as an audiologist.