

Your Healthy Hearing Check-up

Regular hearing health check-ups are an important part of good hearing health care. Your hearing check-up includes the following:

- 1. Hearing test.** Do you think your hearing has changed? We'll compare the results to your previous hearing levels. If we find a change, we'll recommend treatment or adjust your hearing aids to compensate for any change in hearing.
- 2. Re-program your hearing aids.** Sometimes a re-programming of your hearing aids due to a change in hearing or hearing needs is helpful. Many people find they hear better after this adjustment.
- 3. Ear canal examination.** Earwax is one of the most common causes of hearing aid feedback (whistle) and hearing aid repairs.
- 4. Clean and adjust your hearing aids.** Regular cleaning minimizes hearing aid repairs and makes sure that your hearing aids are providing the maximum benefit. *Cleaning your hearing aids sometimes provides a noticeable improvement.*
- 5. Review other sources of help.** This is a good time to ask about telephone amplifiers, clock and smoke alarms, and devices for television and group settings.

*Your hearing deserves good care!
Please call our office to schedule an appointment.*

Hearing Care and COVID-19

We have always followed strict procedures for infection control. Because of the coronavirus pandemic, we have instituted additional stringent procedures in accordance with national and professional association guidelines. We know it's vital that we protect your overall health as we provide your hearing health care needs. Stay safe!

Hearing Aids: More Than Just Better Hearing

Research has shown that if someone has a hearing loss and doesn't get help, the effects are more than not understanding your family, your friends or your co-workers. People who don't get help for their hearing loss are at increased risk for depression, anxiety and dementia. They also have more hospital stays, more emergency room visits and a greater likelihood of falls—one of the most common causes of medical visits in the over-60 year age group.

The good news is that hearing aids minimize these effects. Hearing aid users report better family relationships, an improved social life and less depression. They also have fewer hospital visits, lower health care costs and improved cognitive health.

Hearing aids and your brain

A fascinating study published a few months ago in *Frontiers in Neuroscience* found that hearing aids can also improve how our brains work.

The greatest barrier to better hearing is the person's refusal to seek help.

The researchers studied two groups of older adults (average age of 61 years). One group had normal hearing, while the other group had mild to moderate hearing loss but had not yet used hearing aids.

Brain wave studies found a different pattern in the auditory-attending portion of the brain for the group with hearing loss. Each member of this group was then fit with hearing aids. After using their new hearing aids for six months, the hearing loss group had brain wave results more similar to the group with normal hearing. The researchers concluded:

Hearing aids may reverse the compensatory changes (in brain function).

These changes were accompanied by improvement in a series of mental tasks. Not surprisingly, there were also significant improvements in their ability to understand speech in noisy settings.

It's more than just hearing better

These findings add to the wealth of knowledge we've accumulated over the past 10 years about how important good hearing is. Hearing keeps us in touch with our family and friends, our co-workers, and the

world around us. Hearing as well as possible also keeps us healthier and happier.

Fortunately, we've also seen dramatic improvements in hearing aid technology in the past 10 years. But there is still a major obstacle to good hearing.

The greatest barrier to better hearing is the individual's refusal to seek help. Believe it or not, many people with hearing loss choose not to seek help, even when they admit that their hearing loss is a serious problem.

Oh, the person may admit that "sometimes I hear—I just can't understand." But does anyone ever say, "I can see, just not clearly" and think that's OK?

Fortunately for you and your family, you've taken the steps to hear as well as possible. And that's healthier for you—and your brain.



Using hearing aids may be good for your brain.

WELCOME

... to the Spring issue of our patient newsletter. We hope you find the information useful to you and your family.

Our practice is based on these fundamental principles:

- **Hearing loss is serious**
- **Hearing loss deserves professional care**
- **Hearing aids improve lives**

Testing An Infant's Hearing: The Sooner The Better

Nearly 50 babies with permanent hearing loss are born every day in the United States.

Early identification can make a huge difference. Today more than 95% of newborns have their hearing screened before leaving the hospital. The goal is to begin treatment as soon as possible, including family counseling, hearing aids, speech and language therapy, and early education.

Hearing testing

The most widely used method to test hearing in infants is an automatic test that is quick and inexpensive. The test measures the "echo" of the ear to sound.

These tests are automated and can even be done while the baby is asleep.

Follow-up care

Babies who do not pass the hospital test are referred for complete testing. The purpose of early identification is to provide help as soon as possible. The family will need support and guidance as they learn about early intervention services, including medical and audiologic care, hearing aids or cochlear implants, speech/language therapy and family counseling.

More than 95% of babies have their hearing tested before they leave the hospital.

Children who receive help before six months of age develop significantly better speech and language skills.

Unlike years ago, it is common today for infants to be identified before they are six months old. Intervention such as family counseling, hearing aids, cochlear implants and speech and language therapy can then begin. We've learned that infants with hearing loss who receive treatment prior to six months of age have:

- ▶ better speech and language skills;
- ▶ language in the normal range regardless of degree of hearing loss.

▶ parents who experience less stress than parents of late-identified children.



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*When Should
I Get New
Hearing Aids?*

Hearing aids are more durable and need fewer repairs than ever, but normal wear and tear can cause them to wear out, lose power or need repair. This can happen so gradually that you may not notice the loss of power or decreased battery life.

When should you replace your hearing aids? The life of a hearing aid is usually said to be about five years. Consider the age of your hearing aids, but also think about the important advances in hearing aid technology. Another factor to consider: replacing your hearing aids while they're still working means you'll have a good set of back-up aids available for several years.

When the inevitable hearing aid breakdown occurs, contact us as soon as possible. We can often take care of the problem here in our office.

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