

Hearing HealthCare News®

A newsletter for our patients, their families and friends



Winter 2021

Automatic Hearing

People with normal hearing can hear “automatically.” It doesn’t take much effort and they don’t have to pay close attention. They don’t have to use much effort or brain power, unless they’re in a group or a noisy restaurant.

Most people with hearing loss no longer have automatic hearing. If you have a hearing loss, you have to pay close attention, you have to concentrate, and you have to use some of your brain power to figure out what someone said. All this takes effort and energy, and you just can’t do it 12 hours a day.

Hearing takes attention and energy, and it’s tiring to do it 12 hours a day.

That means you may not hear as well if you’re tired, if you’re under stress, or if you’re thinking about something else. It may be more difficult to hear if you’re having health problems, or you’re just not feeling well.

Feel better, hear better

Hearing aids allow you to hear better, of course. But perhaps it’s just as important that hearing aids also allow you to hear with less effort and less energy. Hearing aids allow you to relax as you communicate with the people around you.

You’ll also hear better and more easily if those around you get your attention before speaking to you. Then you can be prepared to use some of that “brain power.”

So the next time someone says, “You can hear me when you really want to,” you can correct them: “No, you mean I can hear better when I’m ready to listen.”

Did You Know?

People with significant high blood pressure are 75% more likely to have hearing loss. Smokers are 1.7 times more likely to have hearing loss.

Portable hearing aids first appeared in the 1930s and weighed about 2 ½ pounds. A modern hearing aid weighs less than an ounce!

Hearing in Those Noisy Places

The most common complaint of hearing aid users is *difficulty hearing in noise*.

Many noises can interfere with our ability to understand speech. Noise can also be annoying and distracting even when no one is talking.

What’s a common complaint of people with normal hearing? *Difficulty hearing in noise*. For example, the leading complaint about restaurants is how noisy they can be—and that’s from people with normal hearing.

The Digital Age

Years ago, hearing aids were very limited in their ability to control noise and loud sounds. Fortunately, digital hearing aids and current technology are much more effective at managing noise and loud sounds. Modern hearing aids use *noise reduction*, *directional*



amplification and *compression* to manage noise.

Noise reduction programs use the sound characteristics of noise to reduce the amount of amplification. Some hearing aids can avoid amplifying some noise at all. The chief benefits are both improved comfort and better speech understanding.

Directional amplification uses multiple microphones to separate speech from background noise and provide significantly improved speech understanding. Many hearing aids do this automatically based on where the speech is coming from.

Modern hearing aids are much more effective at controlling loud sounds and noise than hearing aids of the past.

Another process controls the loudness of *all* sounds. **Compression** automatically reduces amplification as sound gets louder. Soft sounds can be amplified a lot while loud sounds are amplified less or even not at all. The goal is for you to hear soft sounds while being able to tolerate the loud sounds around you.

While these hearing aid technologies provide much improved comfort and better hearing, hearing in noisy places will always be a challenge to someone with hearing loss. Thankfully, hearing aids also provide the most help in those difficult conditions.

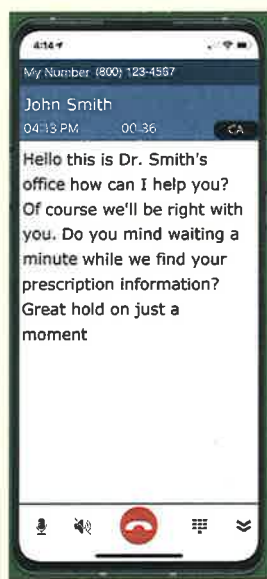
Here’s How To Read Your Phone Calls

People with hearing loss often have difficulty using a telephone. One approach is to use a captioned telephone service. Captioning displays a text of the call and allows people with hearing loss to use the phone easily.

Products such as the *Hamilton CapTel* and *CaptionCall* telephones use voice recognition technology to provide a written text on a large, easy-to-read screen. The service is available for both mobile and landline phones.

InnoCaption is a recent entry in the array of captioning services for people with hearing loss. This is a free app for your mobile smartphone or device that provides real-time captioning of calls. To download the app, find **InnoCaption** in the app store. Download the app and complete a short questionnaire. You’ll then have the option of reading a printed text of any phone call.

For more information, call our office or go to www.captioncall.com, www.captel.com or innocaption.com.



WELCOME

... to the Winter issue of our patient newsletter. We hope the newsletter provides useful information to you and to your family and friends

Our practice is based on these fundamental principles:

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

Can Hearing Aids Reduce Tinnitus?

More than 12 million Americans have severe tinnitus—a ringing, buzzing, or roaring sound heard when no actual sound is present. Many people seek medical attention for their tinnitus.

There is a strong relationship between tinnitus and hearing loss. About 20% of people with hearing loss complain of tinnitus and about 90% of patients with severe tinnitus have hearing loss.

Tinnitus can be disturbing and upsetting. Unfortunately, many people are told “there’s nothing that can help. You’ll just have to learn to live with it.” But that just isn’t true.

Help for tinnitus

Tinnitus treatments include medical

and audiologic evaluation, information, reassurance, counseling, and treatment.

Counseling includes recommendations about lifestyle, such as lowering intake of caffeine, nicotine and alcohol, minimizing noise exposure and getting moderate amounts of exercise. There are many treatments available, many of them controversial and with little or no information about effectiveness.

Hearing aids can help

Many individuals with hearing loss and tinnitus don’t seek help because they mistakenly believe their tinnitus prevents successful use of hearing aids. The majority of hearing aid users report just the opposite. Several surveys of hearing aid users found that not only do their hearing aids help them hear better, hearing aids also significantly reduce their tinnitus.

For more information, call the **American Tinnitus Association** at (800) 634-8978 or go to www.ata.org.

Does Your Doctor Look for Hearing Loss?

According to the *Journal of the American Medical Association*,

“Hearing loss is a common chronic health condition and has important implications for quality of life. However, hearing loss is substantially undetected and untreated.”

The authors recommended that physicians screen for hearing loss of all patients over the age of 55. Despite these recommendations, only about 10% of primary care physicians screen for hearing loss.

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Making Adjustments



Good News! We are pleased to welcome **Audiologist Lynn Fickes** to **DNHA**. Lynn is ready to take a step back from direct patient care and has become our Audiology Assistant. She brings over thirty years of experience to Central Pennsylvania and will be here on a part-time basis to handle walk-in's, hearing aid trouble shooting and will assist the Audiologists. She resides in Newville with her husband, and they enjoy the outdoors by biking, hiking, and kayaking.

Meanwhile, our practice is committed to providing hearing care services to you. Our offices have resumed normal operation with implementation of special procedures. All patients must wear a mask and social distancing is enforced. We sanitize our offices and patient rooms in between appointments. If you don't want to come in, you'll meet Lynn for curbside service!

Sincerely,

**Dr. Kristen A. Duncan Au.D. • Dr. Danette Nulph, Au.D.
Dr. Michelle Tewell, Au.D.**

Duncan-Nulph Hearing Associates

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