

# Hearing HealthCare News<sup>®</sup>

A newsletter for our patients, their families and friends



Winter 2022

## Are You Prepared for Emergencies?

**S**nowstorms, tornadoes, thunderstorms and hurricanes—thankfully, these are rare occurrences. Whatever the emergency, **communication** is a key ingredient for coping with emergency situations.

Good communication is crucial for staying in touch with family, friends and emergency personnel. People with hearing loss face a greater challenge during emergency conditions. Here are some things to think about as part of your emergency preparedness:

**Do I have a buddy system?** It's a good idea to have a nearby family member or friend to stay in contact with in an emergency. However, it's unreliable to count on someone else to alert you—they may be away or unreachable themselves.

**Can I reach my friends and family?** Every household should have at least one mobile or landline phone that will work during a power outage. The phone should have a built-in or attachable amplifier.



**Will my cell phone work?** Making cell phone calls may be difficult because of overloaded circuits. *Text messages* are more likely to get through. Consider keeping a portable charger on hand so you can re-charge your cell phone when power is out.

**What about rechargeable hearing aids?** Many portable chargers can also recharge your hearing aids. Test the charger before an actual emergency.

**Will I be able to send and receive e-mails and get news on-line?** Install a back-up battery and power surge protector for your computer in case of a power outage. New devices, such as the *Ring Alarm Pro*, have a back-up battery, Wi-Fi router and its own cellular data so you can stay online even if electricity is knocked out.

**Do I have enough emergency lighting?** You should have several battery-operated flashlights or lanterns. Some models can be left plugged in and come on automatically in case of a power failure.

Emergencies happen rarely, but it still makes sense to follow the Scout approach—*be prepared*.

## World Health Organization Report on Global Hearing Health Care

"Hearing is the sense through which we engage our environment, communicate with others, and express our thoughts and gain education."

These are the opening words in the *World Report on Hearing*. More than 250 pages in length, the report is a comprehensive review of hearing health care around the world. It makes a strong case that hearing health should become a priority for governments around the world. One reason: society receives about \$16 in benefit for every \$1 spent on hearing health care. But there is a serious challenge: According to the report, there will be more than 2.5 billion people with hearing loss by the year 2050.



## Hearing With Less Effort

**H**earing aids are truly wonderful devices. They make it possible for children with hearing loss to develop normal speech and language and attend regular classrooms. Hearing aids help adults succeed at work and maintain active social lives.

**Hearing aids reduce the effort you need to hear and understand.**

Yes, hearing aids help you to hear *better*. What's less obvious is that hearing aids also allow you to hear with *less effort*.

Someone with hearing loss needs to *concentrate* and pay greater *attention* to hear and understand, even in easy listening situations. This means using more *energy* and *effort*. This effort can make you mentally tired.

Hearing aids reduce that listening effort. Research has shown that many hearing aid users don't use any more listening effort than those with normal hearing. People who start using hearing aids simply "*feel better*" and "*less tired*."

*Hearing better* is the bottom line, of course. But the ability to hear with less *stress* and with less *effort* comes in a close second.

Hearing health services can be organized around the acronym **HEAR**:

- > Hearing screening and intervention
- > Ear disease prevention and management
- > Access to technology
- > Rehabilitation services

The report examines hearing health in individual countries, with an emphasis on prevention, identification, and treatment. The range of access to these services varies tremendously. For example, about 33% of the world population has the benefit of near-universal infant hearing screening (more than 85% of infants screened). But 45% of the global population has little or no infant hearing screening.

Most cases of hearing loss are treatable medically. In less-developed countries, however, access to treatment is severely limited. Most less-developed countries have about **one ENT physician and one audiologist** per million persons. In contrast, there are about **10 ENT physicians and 10 audiologists** per million persons in developed countries.

WHO director Dr. T. Ghebreyesus summarized the challenge:

***Untreated hearing loss can have a devastating impact on the ability to communicate, to study, and to earn a living. It can impact a person's mental health and ability to maintain a relationship. This report offers solutions that we encourage all countries to integrate into their health system.***

*World Report on Hearing*. Available at: [www.who.int/publications/i/item/world-report-on-hearing](http://www.who.int/publications/i/item/world-report-on-hearing)

## WELCOME

... to the Winter issue of our patient newsletter. We hope you find the information useful.

Our practice is based on these fundamental principles:

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



## When the World is Spinning: Dizziness and Falls

Feelings of *dizziness* or *unsteadiness* are a common complaint. About 42% of adults will report dizziness to their doctor or audiologist at least once in their lifetime.

The frequency of balance problems increases with age. Balance disorders and falls are one of the most common reasons for seeking medical help for people over 70 years of age.

Our balance center is connected to the inner ear. The ear and balance systems also share the same nerve leading to the brain. As a result, dizziness may be related to ear and hearing problems.

Two very different descriptions of a dizziness attack are *the room is spinning* or there is a *sense of unsteadiness*. These attacks may happen suddenly or when you change position (such

as getting out of bed). Some people experience faintness or nausea.

### Types of dizziness.

*Vertigo* refers to a problem of the balance system. The person usually complains

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reducing unsteadiness**

of feelings of spinning or turning, rather unsteadiness. Vertigo can be caused by viral infections, medications, head trauma, ear infections and, rarely, tumors.

*Dysequilibrium* refers to more generalized problems of unsteadiness. These complaints are often related to

high blood pressure, hyperventilation, or poor blood circulation.

Because there are so many causes, it can be difficult to identify the cause of a balance disorder. The first step is a medical examination. Specialized tests may include audiologic testing and balance testing such as *electronystagmography* (ENG).

### Treatment.

If a specific cause is found, treatment can be directed at the cause of the balance disorder. In the many cases where a specific cause is not found, medication or a change in diet may be recommended. A program of specially-designed exercises that helps the brain compensate for the change in balance function can be very helpful in reducing unsteadiness.

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*Still Looking  
For That  
Perfect  
Holiday Gift?*



We have some great options for our hearing aid users. Certain hearing aids are compatible with different accessories that can make a big difference to a person with hearing loss.

The **TV adaptor** is a device that is connected to the TV and allows for sound to go directly to a person's hearing aids. This allows the hearing aid user to enjoy TV at their preferred listening level. With the TV adaptor, enjoy shows at a volume the whole family can enjoy! The **connect clip** transforms hearing aids into a wireless headset. An individual can make hands-free phone calls, stream music and utilize a remote microphone. The remote control allows for an individual to make volume changes easily and discreetly.

If you are not sure which accessory to choose, we have a gift certificate option that can be used for anything in the office! Please call our office at (717) 766-1500 with any questions.

Sincerely,

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