

Hearing HealthCare News[®]

A newsletter for our patients, their families and friends

❄ Winter 2023

Can Hearing Aids Cure Hearing Loss?

When someone uses eyeglasses, the vision problems are usually virtually eliminated.

If you use hearing aids, you know that your hearing difficulties, although significantly reduced, are not eliminated. Hearing aids don't cure hearing loss.

Damaged Inner Ear Cells

Most people with hearing loss have an inner ear (*sensorineural*) hearing loss. The inner ear "hearing" cells are damaged, or simply no longer present, perhaps due to noise, aging, or an inherited hearing loss. As a result, you don't hear some sounds. Other sounds may be *distorted*.

Someone with *moderate* sensorineural hearing loss might have only 10,000 inner ear cells working properly, compared to the 15,000 to 20,000 cells present in the normal hearing ear. Someone with a *severe* loss might have only 5,000 cells. And 5,000 or 10,000 ear cells can't do the same job as 20,000 cells.

Hearing Aid Help

Because of dramatic improvements in technology, modern hearing aids do an excellent job of compensating for hearing distortion. Most people who use hearing aids can hear surprisingly well in spite of significant hearing loss, even when in a group or in a restaurant. And with wireless connectivity, a person using hearing aids might hear *better* on the phone than someone with normal hearing.

For example, someone with a severe sensorineural hearing loss might not understand *any* speech without amplification. With hearing aids, this person might increase speech understanding to 60%, which is a tremendous improvement.

A person with only a moderate loss might understand as much as 85% of speech with hearing aids. But even this person's hearing difficulties will not be completely eliminated.

The goal is always *to hear as well as possible*—and although your hearing aids don't cure your hearing loss, your hearing aids should enable you to hear well *most of the time*.

WELCOME

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

Your Hearing Health Care Team

Good hearing health care is based on teamwork—the partnership between you and us, your hearing health care provider.

Our job is to work with you to make sure you're hearing as well as possible. We can't cure your hearing loss, but we can evaluate your hearing and hearing needs, review the kinds of help available, and make sure you're getting the maximum benefits from your hearing devices and other assistive listening devices.

We can't do these things alone. We

The Exquisite Ear

Our ears truly are wondrous. They have an amazing ability to detect sound. They also have an equally amazing ability to tell the difference among billions of different sounds.

We can detect sounds that move the eardrum less than the width of a *single* atom. We can perceive vibrations a million times less intense than those we can sense by touch. And we can tolerate sounds a million times more intense than those we barely hear.

Writing for the *MIT News*, David Chandler described findings of MIT researchers into the working of the inner ear. The tiny structures of the inner ear are a collection of cells and a membrane in the fluid-filled inner ear. The all-important membrane is like jell-o, with atom-size pores that allow the membrane to respond to incoming energy. That movement sends signals to the hair cells which then send a nerve signal along the hearing nerve to our brain.

What a system! It uses almost no energy, and even works while we're asleep. It can warn us about things we can't see—and keep us in touch with the thoughts and feelings of our family and friends. *Hearing as well as possible*—that's something we should not take for granted.

can only work with you as your partner in hearing health care. We want to know about how well you're hearing and any changes in your hearing.

We want to know about your ability to understand words, your sensitivity to loud sounds, and how you're affected by background noise. What are your hearing needs, such as hearing in meetings or on the telephone?

As your partner, we use our knowledge and experience

to make sure you're hearing as well as possible. We also keep you up-to-date about the advanced technology available today, thanks to the engineers and hearing scientists who are also a part of your team.

What's your role?

The most important person on the hearing health care team is *you*. Just as a professional fitness trainer can't exercise for you, we can't "do" the hearing health care for you. *You* have to decide how important hearing is to you. *You* have to decide if your hearing is worth regular check-ups and regular use of the best available hearing aids, and whether other assistive devices are a good idea.

Unfortunately, many people with significant hearing loss actually choose to do *nothing*. As a result, these people experience unnecessary stress and communication difficulties. They experience more social isolation and depression and may lose out on job opportunities at work.

A winning team

People with hearing loss who take advantage of the hearing care available today can do surprisingly well in all kinds of listening settings. Millions of people with hearing loss have improved their own lives and that of their families—all thanks to the hearing health care team.



Teamwork is the winning formula for excellent hearing health care.

Cell Phones and Your Hearing Aids

For many years the telephone was a challenge for people with hearing loss. Today, advances in hearing aid technology have allowed many people with hearing loss to hear on the phone as well as people with normal hearing. Using technology similar to Bluetooth connectivity, hearing aids can be paired to your cell or landline phone. Calls then go directly into your hearing aids—and to both of your ears.

Voice or text?

With mobile devices there's also the option to use written text instead of voice. Texting has obvious benefits if you're in a noisy

place, even if you have normal hearing. You can also connect to the world of e-mail and the internet. Because the signal is

visual, the message can be understood no matter how noisy the environment is or how much hearing loss you have.

The lines between voice and text and between land phones and wireless phones

are blurring. Wynd Communication offers a two-way pager with a Go.Web feature that allows users to surf the Web. They also offer voice-to-text and text-to voice features. *Innocaption*, available as an app, provides captioning of any call to your mobile device.

New devices and technology will

continue to make communication more accessible to people with hearing loss. Whether texting, hearing a phone call through both hearing aids, or having calls captioned in real time, these advances help everyone stay in touch.

Did You Know?

- ✓ Most hotels and theatres have assistive listening devices available.
- ✓ An ostrich's eye is bigger than its brain.
- ✓ Two words in the English language have all five vowels in order (*abstemious and facetious*).
- ✓ Scientists believe whales use their ultra-low frequency hearing for long distance underwater navigation.

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Make It Your OWN

Oticon Own™ New



We are excited to announce the release of a new custom in-the-ear hearing aid option called the **Oticon OWN**. This custom product is equipped with the latest hearing aid science and cutting-edge digital technology.

The advance technology delivers more sound to the brain and increased speech understanding. Speech is clearer in a variety of settings including restaurants and crowds. You will be able to pair your aids to multiple devices including certain cell phones, I-pads, TV's and more for natural sound.

Please call now for an appointment to see if you are a candidate for the **Oticon OWN**.

Sincerely,

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