

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

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

WELCOME

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

Our practice is based on these fundamental principles:

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

Research Demonstrates Benefits of Hearing Aid Use

Several large-scale studies have demonstrated both the significant negative effects of untreated hearing loss and the important benefits of hearing aid use.

Results of the largest study of hearing aid use ever conducted were reported in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. The study investigated hearing aid use in 360 adults at eight Veterans Administration audiology clinics across the United States. The researchers found that "Hearing aids provided substantial benefit over unaided listening. Benefit was observed for measures of speech

recognition and ratings of speech quality in a variety of noisy and quiet conditions."

Audiology researchers at the University of Iowa, studied hearing aid use in 251 adults. Results indicated that among adults with hearing loss, those who used hearing aids reported more satisfaction with life and less depression than those who did not use hearing aids.



Hearing aid users report better family relationships and an improved social life.

The National Council on the Aging (NCOA) surveyed more than 4,000 people. Results of their questionnaire study found that many people with hearing loss never seek treatment and that family members are affected by the hearing loss as well.

The NCOA study also found that adults over 50 years of age who have hearing loss and use hearing aids report:

- better family relationships
- greater independence
- improved social life

Interestingly, family members reported even greater improvements in these areas than did the hearing aid users themselves.

A number of studies have demonstrated the apparent benefit of hearing aid use on brain health. Several studies have shown that individuals with hearing loss, those who do not seek treatment—usually through the use of hearing aids—experience greater cognitive decline than people with normal hearing. Hearing aid users do not experience this decline.

Why not?

If hearing aids provide these important benefits, why don't more people with hearing loss seek help? The most common reason given for not using hearing aids is, "My hearing isn't bad enough."

Nevertheless, a large body of research supports the NCOA recommendation: "Anyone who may have a hearing loss should seek appropriate screening, diagnosis and treatment."

The Loudest Sound in the World

The loudest sound in recorded history was heard by people more than 3,000 miles away. That's like being in Boston and hearing a sound made in Dublin, Ireland. Since sound travels at about 750 miles an hour, it took about four hours for the sound to travel that distance.

The sound was so powerful that it ruptured the eardrums of sailors 40 miles away.

The sound was made on August 27, 1883, by the violent volcanic eruption on Krakatoa, an island in Indonesia. The explosion shattered the island and created a tsunami a hundred feet high. It sounded like artillery in Australia, 2,000 miles away, and like gunfire in Mauritius, 3,000 miles away.

By the 1880's barometers were in use at weather stations around the world to track changes in atmospheric pressure. Although the sound became too soft to be heard beyond 3,000 miles, 12 hours later spikes in atmospheric pressure were measured in St. Petersburg, Rome and Paris. Pressure spikes were detected in New York and Toronto 18 hours later.

Weather stations around the world detected spikes in atmospheric pressure for another five days. The spikes occurred every 34 hours—the time it takes for sound to travel around the globe. It's as if the volcanic explosion at Krakatoa gave the earth tinnitus for five days.

Early Help for Children with Hearing Loss

One of the great successes of our health care system is the early identification of hearing loss in newborn babies. More than 95% of infants now have their hearing screened before leaving the hospital.

The hearing screening uses an automatic screening instrument that measures the newborn's response to sound. The test requires no voluntary response and can be done while the baby is sleeping.

A study of more than 400 children with hearing loss confirmed that children fit with hearing aids by six months of age have better language skills at age five than those who begin using hearing aids after six months of age.

Infants who received cochlear implants by 12 months of age also did

better on tests of language abilities than those fit after 12 months of age.

A ten-year study of more than 400 children with hearing loss found that early identification and treatment leads to important gains in speech and language development.

Many of these children have been followed at three, five and nine years of age. The findings are clear: fitting hearing aids on infants and initiating family intervention by six months of age leads to important gains in speech and language abilities, often leading to essentially normal speech and language development.

Talk to Your Baby

Infants as young as nine months of age can recognize speech as different from other sounds around them.

The researchers studied the responses of babies to recorded sounds of words, birds and various noises. When speech was presented, the babies looked longer at pictures of adult females than at other pictures.

Language specialists consider the early years critical for language development. In the United States, more than 95% of newborn infants are screened for hearing before leaving the hospital.

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What About Those Hearing Aid Ads?

Many of our patients ask us about the splashy hearing aid advertising they get in the mail or see on TV offering seemingly big discounts.

We try to keep you informed about the latest in hearing aid technology without pushing products or "special offers". If something gets your attention, let us know and we'll put it in perspective for you. We will always try to provide you with the best advice, the most options and the top value for your hearing needs.

Like Reading Glasses For Ears

Does someone you know have a "just a little" trouble hearing? Do they wish for just a little hearing help in restaurants or when they're in a group? Open fit hearing aids may be the answer. **Open fit hearing aids** are small, lightweight and rechargeable. It's easy to forget you're wearing them! Call us to schedule an appointment for you or someone you know.

Sincerely,

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Duncan-Nulph Hearing Associates

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