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Keeping our patients informed of the latest news in hearing health care...

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Spring
NEWSLETTER

In appreciation of **Better Hearing & Speech Month**,
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any hearing aid product for the month of **May!**

HEARING SOLUTIONS

Dramatic lifestyle improvement found in patients who start using hearing devices



MAY IS BETTER

HEARING & SPEECH MONTH

May is Better Speech & Hearing Month, an annual event established by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) in 1927. The goal is to raise awareness of speech, language and hearing disorders, which affect an estimated 70 million Americans aged 55 and over. By that time, changes in hearing, speech, language and memory are common, and the odds of developing a speech, language or hearing problem increase. These could be the result of presbycusis (age related hearing loss), stroke, dementia or a neurological disorder. Recognizing the telltale signs early can help an individual.

Symptoms to look for include turning the volume on the TV or radio to a level others find uncomfortable; asking people to repeat themselves frequently; sudden trouble speaking or moving parts of your body; hoarse voice; problems speaking clearly; and difficulty remembering tasks, names and appointments. Any of these may indicate a serious disorder.

Regular checkups and hearing exams can help pinpoint problems early, making the odds of successful treatment more likely. Don't neglect your speech and hearing as you get older; make these a medical priority!

Many scientific studies in the past have confirmed the negative impacts associated with hearing loss: depression, anxiety and social isolation. However not many studies have shown the positive impacts created by a hearing solution. A recent study conducted by the Better Hearing Institute (BHI), supplies overwhelming data about how much of a difference hearing devices can make.

The study surveyed more than 2,000 hearing loss patients who use devices to enhance the sense of sound. Of the sample group, 82 percent of patients would recommend hearing devices to their friends and 70 percent reported improved ability to communicate. The data also shows more than four out of five people who use a device to hear better are satisfied with their solution.

"This survey clearly reveals how dramatically people's lives can improve with the use of hearing devices," BHI Executive Director Sergei Kochkin, PhD said. "In this comprehensive study of more than 2,000 hearing device users we looked at 14 specific quality-of-life issues and found today's hearing devices are a tremendous asset to people with even mild hearing loss who want to remain active and socially engaged throughout their lives."

The study also concluded up to a third of patients saw improvements in their romance, sense of humor, mental, emotional and physical health. Further, roughly 40 percent noted improvements in their sense of safety, self-confidence, feelings about self, sense of independence and work relationships.

These results are the most significant of their kind because they show a clear potential solution to many of the draining feelings patients with hearing loss suffer. Many of the results are attributed to changing technology allowing hearing devices to be much smaller and present less of a societal stigma about wearing devices in day-to-day life. Newly introduced devices are so small they are nearly invisible. The new devices are also more intelligent and offer many improvements over older generation models. BHI's Kochkin says, the first step to preserving your future enjoyment in life is to make an appointment with a hearing health professional and get your hearing checked.

Source: http://www.betterhearing.org/press/news/Customer_satisfaction_hearing_aids_pr08292011.cfm

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Brain Fitness & Hearing Loss

Recent studies have shown a link between hearing loss and dementia. Patients with moderate to severe hearing loss are most at risk for developing degenerative cognitive disorders such as Alzheimer's disease. A study to look at the effects of Brain Fitness software was conducted on participants with a wide range of hearing abilities, the results were impressive.

Participants were randomly assigned to one of two training groups, the Posit Science's Brain Fitness group and the control group. Those assigned to the Brain Fitness group ranged in age from 55 to 70 and were instructed to use the program on their personal computers for one hour each day, five days a week, for a total of eight weeks. Training covered six separate modules that studied the link between memory and perception in different situations, focusing primarily on the consonant-vowel transition, a notoriously vulnerable area of speech. At the start of the program the transition times were extended, and then gradually shortened as listener performance improved. Participants in this group showed improvements in neural timing, short-term memory and processing speed, particularly

in noisy situations, while the control group displayed no change in hearing or cognitive functioning. Those in the Brain Fitness group were enthusiastic over their experience, and reported noticeable improvements in both their ability to hear and to focus on conversations. With such encouraging results, audiologists should consider auditory training techniques to help manage hearing loss in their patients.

Hearing aids provide an invaluable benefit to millions of Americans suffering from hearing loss, but even they have their limits. Following conversations in noisy environments is an ongoing challenge for a number of reasons, including deficits in central auditory processing and cognitive function. Participating in brain exercises is one way for these patients to help improve their listening experience.

Daily brain exercises, in conjunction with maintaining a healthy lifestyle, can help fend off or delay Alzheimer's and other types of dementia. Just fifteen minutes of rigorous brain exercise a day is enough to keep the brain active.

FINDING THE PERFECT FIT *The Art of Hearing Device Selection*

The answer is nothing. In fact, budget hearing devices could be the perfect choice for you. The only way to find out which is best for your hearing lifestyle is to partner with an Audiologist who understands both the art and science of selecting and fitting hearing devices.

The advanced technology of today's hearing devices means you have more features from which to choose. These added features, while providing added benefits, also make a hearing device more expensive. However, depending upon your unique requirements, more may not be necessary.

Think of it this way. If you were a serious athlete planning on running a marathon and you decided to purchase a treadmill to do some off-season training, you might choose a \$4500 model on which you could run full speed at varying degrees of inclines, all while the machine kept track of your heart rate and tracked your progress. You would probably also want to have a personal trainer, experienced in achieving the highest possible performance to assist you in getting the most out of your investment and workouts. However, if you just wanted to take an occasional walk and perhaps lose a few pounds, a \$500 treadmill might just do the trick.

The same considerations are true when it comes to selecting appropriate hearing devices. If you are very active, live in a variety of noisy environments and don't want to be bothered adjusting volume, then you will probably be happier with hearing devices

which include advanced features such as directional microphones, feedback cancellation or automatic adjustments. In conjunction with this, you will be most satisfied with your results with the involvement of an experienced Audiologist to tailor the features of the device to your personal needs and achieve maximum benefit. If you live a quiet life and don't mind making manual adjustments, then a more economical hearing device might be perfect for you. In short, it is the art of selection and fitting combined with the science of technology that will have the most direct impact on your level of satisfaction.

Our Audiologists are skilled at matching your needs to the most appropriate technology and fitting the devices to provide maximum benefit. We have been trained to make their recommendations for the type and style of hearing devices based upon five important criteria:

- Your personal lifestyle
- Your level of hearing loss
- The physical characteristics of your ear canal
- Your cosmetic preferences
- Your budget constraints

Our Audiologists ask many questions, because we want to get to know you. We believe by investing time into understanding what your life is like and what is important to you, we will be able to ensure your optimal hearing while providing you the best value.

Vitamins and antioxidants boost healthy hearing dramatically

Carrots, spinach, kale, swiss chard and mustard greens all used to play big parts in the American diet but many of these vegetables rich in vitamins A and E seem to have fallen out of favor with consumers. This trend is not only damaging to heart health but also can contribute to dramatic hearing loss.

A study conducted by the University of Sydney in Australia looked at the antioxidant content of the diets from 3,000 participants during the past five years. The results showed those subjects who had the highest intake of vitamin A had a 50 percent risk reduction for severe or moderate hearing loss. The study showed reactive oxygen damages the inner ear, which can damage the ability to hear. Antioxidants reduce the risk for damage thus protecting the sense of sound.

The subjects in the study with the highest level of vitamin E content showed a 15 percent reduction in risk of hearing damage.

According to the researchers, diet is one of the few modifiable risk factors for age-related hearing loss. The authors' goal was to examine the link between dietary and supplement intakes of antioxidants, and both the prevalence and five-year incidence of measured hearing loss.

<http://jotzoom.com/antioxidants-and-hearing-loss-benefits/1593/>



Diabetes diagnosis connected to hearing loss

Diabetes can cause blurry vision, hunger, thirst and fatigue; a lesser known associated condition is hearing loss. In fact the National Institutes of Health (NIH) found hearing loss to be about twice as common in adults with diabetes compared to those without the disease.

This study is alarming to many otolaryngologists and audiologists because there is no recommendation for hearing loss screenings in a diabetes care regimen. Awareness is key in increasing screening and discovering diabetes patients who suffer from hearing loss. Many doctors fail to recommend a hearing test at the annual checkup of diabetes patients. It's important for those with diabetes to take an active role in their health care and seek treatment for any associated conditions they may be at risk for.

"Hearing loss may be an under-recognized complication of diabetes," senior author Catherine Cowie, Ph.D. said. "As diabetes becomes more common, the disease may become a more significant contributor to hearing loss. Our study found a strong and consistent link between hearing impairment and

diabetes using a number of different outcomes."

The reason for this connection is not definitive, but some evidence is suggestive: The NIH study reports diabetes may lead to hearing loss by damaging the nerves and blood vessels of the inner ear.

Afflicting nearly 21 million people in the United States, diabetes is a major cause of heart disease and stroke and the most common cause of blindness, kidney failure, and lower limb amputations in adults. Pre-diabetes, which causes no symptoms, affects about 54 million adults in the United States. This high incidence of pre-diabetes and the connection between dangerous associated conditions are encouraging many to evaluate their risk of developing diabetes. See your doctor if you think you might be pre-diabetic or if you suffer from diabetes and believe you may have the beginning stages of hearing loss.

Source: http://www.betterhearing.org/press/news/Diabetes_and_hearing_loss_risk_pr030811.cfm

