

Hearing Health Care News®

A newsletter for our patients, their families and friends



Summer 2016

The Good Hearing Partnership

Good hearing care is a partnership between you and us. It also involves your family, friends and co-workers. But the most important partner is *you*.

You've probably taken the most important steps already. You recognized that you have a hearing loss and have taken positive steps to make sure you're hearing as well as possible. You sought professional care. What else can you do to make sure that you're hearing as well as possible?

Educate your family and friends. Let the people around you know you have a hearing loss—it's a lot easier than trying to hide it. And have you shared these tips?

- I may *hear* you when you speak from another room—but I probably won't *understand* what you said.
- Please get my attention before speaking.
- Look at me when you talk to me.

Use your eyes to hear better. Lipreading is like having a third hearing aid—and it's free. Most people with hearing loss are already good lipreaders. The most important lipreading tip: look at the person who's talking!

Take good care of your hearing. Avoid loud sounds and noisy settings both to protect your hearing and to make listening more enjoyable. Exercise—good cardiovascular health contributes to

“The most important partner is you.”

healthy hearing. Regular audiologic evaluations and hearing aid cleaning and adjustments ensure you're hearing as well as possible.

Take good care of your hearing aids. Hearing aids are complex, sophisticated electronic instruments. They require routine care. Call us as soon as you notice any hearing aid problem. The sooner we can check it, the more likely we can take care of the problem, usually right in our office.

Use other sources of help. Other devices, such as telephone amplifiers and wireless systems for television, can provide additional help for situations that are especially difficult. Call us if you would like specific suggestions.

As an active partner in your hearing healthcare, you have the satisfaction of knowing you're doing everything possible to *hear as well as possible*.

Hear Better, Think Better

Several studies have found a relationship between hearing loss and a decline in mental function in older adults.

For example, a study conducted at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine found “for individuals older than 60 years, more than one third of the risk of dementia was associated with hearing loss.”

The researchers suggested that using hearing aids can minimize the risk of dementia. But do we really *know* that hearing aids can protect mental health?

Apparently we do. Several studies now suggest that hearing aids can minimize and perhaps even eliminate the decline in mental function associated with untreated hearing loss.

In one small study, adults who used hearing aids had no difference in a test of mental function than the group with normal hearing. However, the group with



Hearing aids can play an important role in keeping your brain healthy.

Important: Your Healthy

Hearing Check-up

Regular hearing health check-ups ensure that you're hearing as well as possible. Your hearing check-up includes the following:

1. **Examine your ear canals.** Earwax is one of the most common causes of hearing aid feedback (whistle) and hearing aid repairs.
2. **Test your hearing.** We'll compare the results to your previous hearing levels. If we find any change, we'll recommend treatment or re-program your hearing aids to compensate for the change. Many people find they hear better after this adjustment.

3. **Clean and adjust your hearing aids.** Regular cleaning minimizes hearing aid repairs and makes sure that your hearing aids are providing maximum benefit to you.

Cleaning and re-programming of your hearing aids often makes a noticeable improvement in your ability to hear.

4. **Review other sources of help.** This is a good time to ask about telephone amplifiers, clock and smoke alarms, and devices for television and group settings.

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

hearing loss that did not use hearing aids had lower scores on the test.

A larger study of nearly 4,000 older adults conducted over a 25-year period had similar findings.

The adults were divided into three groups: (1) no hearing loss; (2) hearing loss and no hearing aids; (3) hearing loss with hearing aids. When tested 25 years later, the adults who used hearing aids had no significant difference in mental performance from the group with normal hearing. The group that did not use hearing aids declined more on tests of brain function than those who used hearing aids.

Hearing aid users did not experience the decline in mental function experienced by those who did not use hearing aids.

Benefits of healthy hearing

Untreated hearing loss has been associated with social isolation, anxiety and depression. The use of hearing aids minimizes that social isolation and may explain the lack of brain function decline in the group that used hearing aids. On the other hand, this was not a randomized study. It could be that adults who choose to use hearing aids differ in other ways from those who choose not to.

Nevertheless, research strongly supports the importance of keeping your hearing active and healthy. It seems that using hearing aids not only reduces the social isolation and depression caused by untreated hearing loss, but can also play an important role in keeping your brain healthy.

You'll *hear* better. And *think* better.

Welcome

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

Our practice is based on three fundamental principles:

- *Hearing loss is serious*
- *Hearing loss deserves professional care*
- *Hearing aids work*