



Hearing Loss and Dementia

In recent years, researchers have discovered that people who experience hearing loss as they age may also be at higher risk of developing dementia. In a study conducted at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in Baltimore in conjunction with the National Institute on Aging, researchers found older adults with hearing loss were more likely to develop cognitive decline over time than those who retain their hearing. While the specifics of the correlation are unknown, it has been suggested that a common pathology may underlie both, or that strain of decoding sounds over the years may overwhelm the brains of people who have hearing loss, leaving them more vulnerable to dementia. Another speculation was that hearing loss could leave people more socially isolated and less likely to engage in social behaviors, which is a risk factor for dementia and other similar disorders. This development only reaffirms how important early intervention is in preventing the neurological stress of hearing loss.

In addition, hearing loss compounds problems of existing cases of dementia. Of the people who are living with Alzheimer's Disease, many have hearing loss but it has not been identified or treated. The Better Hearing Institute recommends that hearing checks, hearing healthcare and hearing devices if appropriate be included in the regiment of care for Alzheimer's patients. The use of hearing devices can help with depression,

disorientation, anxiety, social isolation, negativism, loss of independence and general cognitive decline in these patients. Unaddressed hearing loss can significantly compound the strain of Alzheimer's, both on the person suffering as well as his or her caregiver. Hearing devices may reduce Alzheimer's symptoms for people with the disease.

For those still not convinced, an even more recent study helps to support an association between hearing loss and cognitive decline. According to the study published in JAMA Archives of Internal Medicine, those with hearing loss experience a 30% to 40% greater decline in thinking abilities compared to those with normal hearing. The subjects were assessed on memory, thinking abilities and decision-making as well as their performance on their hearing test over three, five and six years. They found that people with hearing loss had a faster rate of mental decline compared to people with normal hearing and the greater the rate of untreated hearing loss, the faster the decline of memory and thinking.

There are a few theories as to why this happens, though no definite explanation. The big question will be, will treating hearing loss have an impact on brain function and memory decline.

CUSTOM EAR MOLDS

Provide Superior Protection and Comfort



Audiologists agree, protecting your hearing should have a more important role in our day-to-day lives. Noisy air travel, loud music devices, roaring sporting events, rocking concerts, loud outdoor jobs and even hunting can pose serious risks to hearing health. According to the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, 17% of adults from ages 20 to 69 (approximately 26 million!) have suffered permanent damage to their hearing from excessive exposure to noise. Many turn to audiologists and Ear, Nose & Throat practices for hearing evaluations and advice on protecting their hearing. Custom earmolds can often provide a simple and effective solution.

All patients have uniquely shaped ears. This means one-size-fits-all headphones, hearing devices and ear plugs don't always function the way they should. Inexpensive ear molds provide a custom-fitted solution which can be used in a wide variety of ways. Industrial workers, dentists, pilots, musicians and avid hunters could benefit tremendously from a custom noise-suppression mold. These ear molds can also be useful for earbuds, hearing devices, cell phone and Bluetooth accessories, motor sports and even swimmers who deal with frequent swimmer's ear.

Most ear molds are manufactured with either small or large open vents, depending on patient needs. Ear molds with larger vents are known as open fit and are recommended for patients with good hearing in low pitches. The vents allow the low frequencies to exit the mold naturally. Venting also contributes to more natural sound quality and less occlusion, or "plugged up" feeling. The custom molds are like common earplugs and can be inserted and removed easily.

These comfortable and convenient molds can be crafted from a wide range of materials. Acrylic, soft vinyl, silicone and polyethylene are all options you and your audiologist can choose from. Once a material is chosen, your hearing professional will take an impression of your ears with a putty-like silicone that will be used to create your final custom-made mold. This process takes just about 30 minutes. Following your impression, the replica of your ear shape is sent to the manufacturer after which you receive your molds in about two or three weeks. Aesthetics, comfort, acoustics and a superior seal are all reasons an ear mold can be advantageous to maintaining your healthy listening lifestyle.

Source: http://www.betterhearing.org/press/news/Depression_mental_health_and_hearing_loss_pr0913.cfm



According to the website,

www.fallprevention.org, 3 in 10 adults aged 70 years old and older will fall each year. 1 in 10 of those who fall will suffer a serious injury such as a broken bone or head injury. Falls also lead to difficulty with daily activities and walking and a fear of more falls, leading people to restrict their activity level.

One reason people fall is due to hazards in the home. There are some things you can do at home to make your environment safe and help prevent you from falling.

1. Remove loose rugs or "throw rugs" from areas in your home or make sure the edges are firmly attached to the floor with adhesive tape so that you won't trip over them.
2. Maintain proper lighting in your home so that you can see well as you move from room to room. This includes hallway lighting and using a night light if you have to get up to go to the bathroom at night.
3. Maintain a path clear of objects as you move from room to room. Too much clutter is a trip hazard.
4. If you have pets, try a bell or another noise maker on their collar so if they are underfoot, you can hear them when they move and won't trip over them.
5. Avoid sudden moves like turning quickly or standing up too suddenly to answer the phone or door.

MED-EL Announces Worldwide Launch of RONDO® Single-Unit Processor for Cochlear Implants

The cochlear implant manufacturer, MedEL, has launched a newly designed external processor. The coil, control unit, and battery pack are combined into a compact, single-unit design. For the first time, MedEL cochlear implant recipients can choose an audio processor that can be worn completely off-the-ear.

Its design makes it comfortable, compact and convenient to wear so that users can simply 'put it on and go.' For discreet wear, the audio processor disappears easily under the hair. With no ear hook, separate coil or cable, RONDO features fewer parts for enhanced durability. Because the ear is free, RONDO is an ideal audio processor choice for individuals who regularly wear glasses or sunglasses.

RONDO is based on the proven OPUS audio processor platform, and features the same signature technologies, Automatic Sound Management and Fine Hearing, ensuring optimal hearing in changing and challenging listening situations without requiring the user to make program adjustments. The RONDO may be worn by all patients previously implanted with a MED-EL cochlear implant and includes the FineTuner remote control unit.



MED^oEL



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

New Technology

The Serenade tinnitus treatment system consists of a handheld device, earphones, and proprietary, customized treatment sounds. Following the tinnitus evaluation, the Serenade device is programmed to play sounds most likely to be effective for each individual. This approach may be used to seek immediate relief, as well as long term benefit when used as part of an ongoing tinnitus treatment program.

Benefits of Serenade:

- Unlike other approaches, this treatment is customized to your specific tinnitus.
- Includes 4 different sound tracks including new treatment sounds known as S-Tones, developed by leading hearing experts.
- Device is small, portable and easy to use, day or night.
- Includes Sleep Assist – a 60 minute auto timer to help patient fall asleep.
- Independent left and right volume controls offer maximum flexibility and comfort.

EARS, Inc. is proud to announce we are now offering SoundCure Serenade for sufferers of tinnitus. Serenade is a complete, FDA cleared sound therapy solution that is simple to use and customized to each patient!

Please contact us for more information about this exciting new technology or visit www.soundcure.com



Please call us or visit www.soundcure.com to find out more.

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



Summer 2013
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CLINIC NEWS

Oticon releases Alta & Alta Pro with a new streamer! This new hearing device is as unique as your fingerprint! Completely customizable and personalized based on your individual lifestyle and the way YOU "hear" the world – Also available in a variety of sleek styles to fit your preferences. The advanced technology of the small and discreet Alta is built on Oticon's powerful new Inium processing platform, facilitating the exchange of vital sound information between both ears for a more natural sound experience. As Alta automatically focuses on conversation that is taking place in front of you and adjusts accordingly, you can turn from one conversation to another.

With the addition of the integrated Oticon ConnectLine system, you can also connect easily and wirelessly to landline and cell phones, office phones, TV's, video chatting and more.

Throughout June and July, receive a 5% discount on Alta and Alta Pro hearing devices!

Call us for more information!
408.426.5009



Auditory System Deprivation

AND ITS LONG-TERM EFFECTS

Hearing only starts with your ears. It is the auditory system, which is composed of the outer ear, the middle ear, the inner ear and the auditory neurological pathway, that allows the process of hearing to occur. That process begins when sound waves enter the outer ear and are channeled through the other complex parts of the ear, the nervous system and into the brain. The physical characteristics of the original sound are preserved as various types of energy that the brain recognizes and identifies as a particular sound. So, in actuality, you hear with your brain!

However, when it comes to maintaining your auditory system, you lose it if you don't use it. Just as the muscles in your body become sore when you exercise after a period of doing nothing, your auditory system will have a hard time getting back into shape should you suddenly decide to wear hearing devices (especially if you have gone a long time without treating your hearing loss.) Your brain will lose some of its ability to process information due to lack of stimulation and as a result, it will be more difficult to recognize sounds... even with hearing devices.

To minimize the impact of auditory deprivation, you should address the hearing loss sooner once diagnosed, rather than when the condition gets worse. Providing solutions and positive outcomes for patients with advanced/longstanding hearing loss can be done but with greater challenges as the condition of the neurological system is weak. Early intervention results in better outcomes.

We recommend you receive a baseline hearing test beginning at the age of 40. During this test we can determine the lowest volume level you can hear at various frequencies or pitches. We can then reference this at subsequent testing and monitor changes.

Once your hearing threshold is identified, we encourage you to have periodic hearing tests (every two or three years) to help prevent and / or identify hearing loss earlier than you otherwise might. If you are a hunter, musician, woodworker or are frequently and consistently exposed to loud noise, an annual hearing test is recommended. It is only through preventative care that we can help you prevent further damage to your hearing system.

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