



SOUND Advice

from the professionals at EAR Associates



Fall 2011

www.earassociates.com

EAR, INC. IS GLAD TO WELCOME BACK BEHROUZ FARSI



Behrouz Farsi grew-up in northern California, graduated with a bachelors degree in the biological sciences from UC

Davis before working as a public health specialist and then a clinical research scientist at the National Institutes of Health. He graduated as a physician assistant from the Yale School of Medicine in 1999. He has worked in the fields of GI medicine, surgery and oncology. After formerly serving the practice at EARS for 2 years, he is now returning to once again practice otology and otolaryngology with Dr. Maw. He brings to the practice a love of the healing arts, compassion, as well as the desire to connect with and provide superlative service to his patients. He is married, has a son and loves to travel as well as explore/experience the arts, the outdoors and good food. We are excited to welcome back Behrouz to EARS, Inc.

Hearing Loss: Separating Facts from Fiction



▶ **MYTH:** The most common cause of hearing loss is advancing age.

TRUTH: Exposure to loud noise is the number one cause of hearing loss while only 35% of people with hearing loss are older than age 64. There are nearly six million people in the U.S. between the ages of 18 and 44 with hearing loss, and more than one million are school age. Hearing loss affects all age groups. Hereditary factors and health conditions like heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes and other circulatory problems also cause hearing loss along with certain medications like aspirin, some antibiotics and chemotherapy drugs.

▶ **MYTH:** Only people with serious hearing loss need hearing devices.

TRUTH: The need for hearing amplification is dependent on your lifestyle, your degree of hearing loss and your need for a more sophisticated level of hearing. If you are a teacher or a lawyer, for example, refined hearing is necessary to understand the nuances of communication. Therefore you may not be able to tolerate even a mild level of hearing loss.

▶ **MYTH:** If I had a hearing loss, my family doctor would have told me.

TRUTH: According to the Better Hearing Institute only 14% of physicians routinely screen for hearing loss during a physical.

▶ **MYTH:** Hearing devices will make me look "older."

TRUTH: It is not the hearing instruments that make one look older, it is the fact you cannot hear, understand and communicate normally with others that make you look older. In fact, many of today's instruments are nearly invisible when worn .

▶ **MYTH:** Hearing devices aren't worth the expense.

TRUTH: Research conducted by the Better Hearing Institute concluded 9 out of 10 people indicate the quality of their life has improved with hearing instruments. Overall satisfaction with 1 year old hearing systems is now 78%, which is close to satisfaction ratings for most consumer electronics.

Source: Better Hearing Institute website at www.bhi.org

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Is background noise driving you **CRAZY?**

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

You can also temper the effects of challenging listening conditions by using effective communication strategies. You may find these suggestions helpful when dining out:

1. Plan ahead by choosing a quieter restaurant. Try to find carpeted restaurants that have chairs with rollers on the legs (thus preventing an annoying scraping sound when they are moved), plants, and sound absorbent materials on the tables and walls.
2. Make reservations ahead of time and ask for accommodations such as a table away from the kitchen.
3. Pick the best day and time (not Friday nights!) to dine out.
4. Sit with your back to the window, so that the lighting is on the speaker's face, not on your eyes.
5. Use directional microphones and/or an FM system. If your hearing instruments are set to directional, be sure to sit with your back to the main noise source.
6. If restaurant dining is for business, request another place to meet.

Ask new hearing instrument users to name the number one thing they like about their new hearing instruments, and they will probably answer, "I don't have to strain so much to hear anymore!" Ask them to name the number one thing they don't like, and they will probably say, "I can't stand the background noise. It's driving me crazy!"

Background noise is handled much better now with advancements in technology. However, during one's initial experience back to hearing life's environmental sounds it may take the brain some time to re-acclimate to the sounds around us. Background noise includes; traffic noise, music, reverberation (which causes sounds to echo when reflected off room surfaces), voices such as children playing and laughing, several people talking at once, or even one person talking in a way that prevents or distracts from listening to something you want to hear. Background noises can particularly bother new hearing instrument users during the first few weeks because for years they may not have heard everyday noises such as screeching brakes, clattering dishes, and rustling papers. Most long-time hearing instrument users will tell you that the sudden ability to hear annoying noises –loud and clear- is challenging, but the ability to tolerate these noises does get better with time.

Experienced hearing instrument user or not, noise can affect you in at least two ways. First, it can make it nearly impossible to understand what someone is saying because the noise is louder than the signal you want to hear. Second, noise may be a problem because it distracts you from what the speaker is saying. Although there is no cure for the problems that hearing instrument users often experience with distracting noises, some options may at least lessen problems with background noise:

- Wear two hearing instruments, rather than just one. Our brain is programmed to filter information from both ears.
- Use hearing instruments with digital signal processing
- Buy hearing instruments with a directional microphone option
- FM technology & wireless microphones
- Take an auditory training course
- Learn communication strategies

A number of possible solutions help decrease the problems of listening in a noisy environment. Although in some listening situations it may be impossible to carry on a relaxed conversation (such as trying to hear someone when standing next to a noisy lawnmower), communication technologies can ease some or most of the distressful listening conditions experienced by people with hearing loss. Try discussing some of these solutions with your audiologist and you may once again enjoy dining out with friends, attending parties, participating in religious services and conversing with relatives at family dinners.

Source: "Tips for Hearing in Noise" by Patricia B. Kricos, Ph.D. Better Hearing Institute website at www.betterhearing.org.

NEW SOPHONO BONE ANCHORED DEVICE ELIMINATES PRIMARY PATIENT OBJECTION

Traditional bone anchored devices (Baha) require a through-the-skin abutment with a titanium screw that protrudes from the side of the head. The abutment site requires daily cleaning and requires permanent hair follicle removal at the site of the implant. While the benefits to those with conductive and mixed hearing loss or single sided deafness are many, often patients resist the idea of having an abutment implanted. Instead they choose to live with a hearing loss.

The Alpha 1 system, developed by Sophono, Inc., is the world's first abutment-free, implantable bone anchored hearing device. The Alpha 1 system is available with two different options: The Alpha 1 S and Alpha 1 M hearing devices. The Alpha 1 M uses the Otomag Alpha 1 Bone Conduction

The Alpha 1 M uses the Otomag Alpha 1 Bone Conduction Hearing System uses a magnetic coupling system to connect the external sound processor to a titanium implant.

Hearing System, which does not require an abutment, but instead uses a magnetic coupling system to connect the external sound processor to a titanium implant. There is no daily cleaning routine and as no hair follicles are removed, the hair will grow back over the incision. The device is implanted on an out-patient basis that takes just one hour.

The Alpha 1 S technology is available for patients who do not wish to undergo surgery or for children less than 5 years of age. These patients would be fitted with an external processor held on to the head with a soft band. The Alpha 1 S and M processors are completely programmable digital systems with 8 channels and 16 frequency bands. If you have conductive or mixed hearing loss and have pain or infections with hearing aid use or have single sided deafness (complete deafness in one ear and normal in the other), please call us for more information. You may be a candidate for this exciting new device.

BAHA NEWS

There is some news for our patients with BAHA bone anchored hearing aids: Cochlear Americas recently introduced the new Baha 3 Power (BP110) sound processor with the most powerful Bone anchored hearing aid transducer. The BP110 processor provides more amplification in the high frequencies, where many patients require more amplification. The Baha 3 power

external processor is the thinnest programmable power device with directional microphones. The new BP 110 processor is designed for better performance in noisy situations and improved speech understanding. It is designed for patients with single sided deafness and moderate hearing loss in their better ear.

For more information on BAHA or the BP110, please call and speak to one of our audiologists. This processor may make a difference if you feel your Divino or BP100 is underpowered.

Cochlear
Baha 3 Power!





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www.earassociates.com

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

Call today to experience the difference

Clear and easy one-on-one conversations in crowded environments

ConnectLine Microphone is a tiny, discreet clip-on microphone. Just give your chosen speaker the ConnectLine Microphone, and his/her voice is streamed wirelessly to your hearing instruments. Communication improves because you get a better speech signal, and you find yourself able to participate more actively in situations that may have seemed impossible before.

Come and experience the difference

We invite you to come in for a brief demonstration. Feel free to come alone or to bring a loved one so you can hear a familiar voice even more clearly. Please call us to schedule an appointment.

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Expires November 23rd