

Hearing HealthCare News[®]

A newsletter for our patients, their families and friends

Fall 2023

Lipreading: Your Third Hearing Aid

You probably get help from lipreading, even if you don't know it. When you use those lipreading skills, your understanding of speech goes up about 30%!

Fortunately, the sounds that are *hardest* to hear are *easiest* to lipread. For example, "f" as in "fin" and "p" as in "pin" are difficult to hear because they are soft, high-pitched sounds. But these sounds are easy to lipread because they're very visible. With the help of lipreading, it's easy to "hear" the difference between "fin" and "pin."

That's why almost everyone hears better when they can see the person talking. And lipreading happens automatically. You don't have to think about how "f" looks different from "p." But you *do* have to be able to see the person who's talking!

Test your lipreading skills

With your eyes closed, adjust the volume of your television until you're able to *hear* the sound, but not *understand* the voices. Now open your eyes and see how much more you can understand. That's the difference lipreading makes.

Lipreading tips

- Ask the speaker to get your attention before starting a conversation
- Make sure you can see the speaker's face
- Watch the person's face, not just the lips. Facial expressions and gestures give important clues
- Concentrate on the general conversation rather than individual sounds and words

Lip-reading can be a great source of help. It's almost like having a third hearing aid – and it's free!

Wax guards

If you change (or recharge) your hearing aid batteries and the hearing aid still doesn't work, the speaker may be blocked with ear wax, moisture or dust. Most hearing aids have a wax guard to prevent wax and moisture from getting inside. You can change the wax guard at home, or we will be happy to change it in the office.

Family, Friends, and Hearing Loss

Hearing loss affects a person's ability to communicate with family and friends. But hearing loss also affects the people *around* the person with hearing loss.

Ironically, the closer the relationship, the greater the effects of hearing loss. These include the effects of *denial* of the hearing loss and the effects of the hearing loss itself.

Denial

Hearing loss usually develops so gradually that the person is not aware of any change. It's

not unusual to wait 5, 10 or even 20 years to seek help. During this time, family and friends may engage in compromises and arguments as they try to deal with a hearing loss that hasn't been acknowledged ("I would hear if everybody didn't mumble! "What do you mean the TV is too loud?").

During the denial stage, family members may become more irritated at the refusal to seek help. Stress, friction and arguments can be the result ("You can hear me when you want to!").

It is not unusual for the denial of hearing loss to cause more friction

Suggestions for Family and Friends

Elsewhere in this issue we discuss the effects of hearing loss on family and friends. Family and friends can also help minimize the effects of hearing loss. Here are some suggestions you can share:

Get my attention before talking to me.

This allows me to "get ready" to listen.

Be in the same room. It's simply too difficult when you're far away and out of sight.

Face me. I understand more easily if I can see your face when you're speaking.

Don't talk fast. Sometimes I have to figure out what some said and I can't keep up with a fast talker.

Reduce background noise. Please lower the television or radio. Hearing in noise is much harder for me than it is for you.

than the hearing loss itself. Family members may stop talking about unimportant matters because "it's not worth the effort." They may even avoid interacting at all. In social situations, a spouse may act as an interpreter to help the spouse keep up with conversations. This can

interfere with the husband-wife relationship because of the change from previous, more independent roles.

Acceptance

Only after the hearing loss is recognized can efforts to

minimize the effects begin. With professional help—almost always through the use of hearing aids—most people with hearing loss can watch television at a normal volume, hear family and friends most of the time, and ask people to repeat less often. These changes make life easier for

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everyone and greatly reduce family tension and friction. Family and friends also know the person has made a commitment to minimize the effects of hearing loss.

Summary

Hearing loss *can* have significant effects on the individual's family and friends. With the help available today, these effects are minimized for everyone—the person with the loss *and* their family and friends.

WELCOME

... to the Fall issue of our newsletter. We hope you find the information helpful.

Our practice is based on three fundamental principles:

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



Hearing loss is a family affair

Mercury-free Batteries That Run on Air

Every hearing aid needs a source of steady and dependable power. The source of that dependable power is the *zinc-air hearing aid battery*.

Running on air

Hearing aid batteries once contained as much as 50% mercury. By the 1990's that level was reduced to 1%. Now hearing aid batteries have absolutely no mercury.

Modern hearing aid batteries use *zinc* as their major component. The second major ingredient is *air*, which comes from outside the battery. Removing the tape covering the tiny holes in the battery activates this zinc/air interaction.

Battery life

Why don't hearing aid batteries last longer? After all, they pack almost double the energy of the batteries of years ago.

Two factors affect battery life: battery size and the work batteries are asked to perform.

Today's hearing aid battery runs on air.

The most common hearing aid battery today is size 312. The small 312 is about 1/3 the size of the once popular 675. This allows manufacturers to make smaller and smaller hearing aids—but the tradeoff

is shorter battery life.

Perhaps just as significant is the work hearing aid batteries perform. Your hearing aids are constantly sampling the sound environment around you, adjusting to the direction of speech, perhaps reducing amplification for loud sounds and noise, canceling feedback, streaming sound from a cell phone or television, sending information to the other hearing aid, and more. This all uses battery energy.

The modern hearing aid battery, whether rechargeable or disposable, is much improved from the battery of just a few years ago. Maybe someday, these batteries will last even longer.

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What Is Tinnitus?

Tinnitus is the perception of noises within the ears or head (e.g., ringing, buzzing, whooshing, roaring, crickets, etc.) in the absence of an external sound. Approximately 30 million Americans experience tinnitus on a regular basis.

Treatment- The first step is always a hearing test. The audiologist will take a case history in order to obtain specific information regarding the patient's tinnitus as well as administer a hearing evaluation.

Tinnitus is common in patients with hearing loss. For patients with hearing loss, the audiologist can help to determine whether a hearing aid will help to reduce tinnitus as well as improve hearing.

Please call us to schedule your initial hearing evaluation and explore your options.

Sincerely,

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