



Summer is Almost Here!

DID YOU HEAR?

Reduce Your Hearing Aid's Risk of Hot Weather Damage.

Heat

Both hearing aids and batteries can be damaged by high temperatures. Avoid leaving hearing aids and batteries in the car. Find a cool, dry place to store them.

Sweat

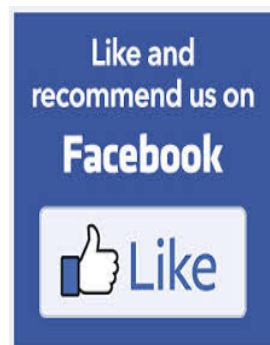
The high temperatures and humidity of the summer months can spell disaster for hearing aids. Increased water in the air can cause water to condense inside your devices, a complication that gets worse when you sweat. If you feel your aids have been exposed to increased moisture, storing them in a dehumidifier every night will give them a chance to dry out. Southern Vermont Audiology has hearing aid dehumidifiers for sale.

Pool

If you are heading to the pool or lake to beat the heat, be sure to remove your hearing aids before you get in the water and store them in a waterproof container in a shady spot.

Sunscreen

Sunscreen is vital in protecting against burns and skin cancer but it can also clog your hearing aid's ports and filters. Always remove your hearing aids before applying sunscreen or bug repellent and wipe down your devices after any activity that moistens your skin.



COMMUNICATION ACROSS THE LIFESPAN

Better Hearing & Speech Month

How Hearing Aids Can Keep Your Brain Young



Modern neuroscience has discovered something astonishing: your brain can change itself well into your adult years. This is called “neuroplasticity”. In the early 1900’s, it was accepted that the brain stopped changing in adolescence, but we now acknowledge that the brain responds to change all throughout life. Researchers from the University of Colorado found that even with minimal hearing loss, the segment of the brain devoted to hearing can become reorganized and reassigned to other functions. This is believed to explain the link between hearing loss and cognitive decline.

Therefore, if you have hearing loss and find yourself saying “what was that?” a lot, it’s not only because of the damage to the inner ear, but it is also caused by structural changes to your brain. While neuroplasticity exacerbates the effects of hearing loss, it also heightens the effectiveness of hearing aids. Our brain can create new connections, regenerate tissue, and reroute neural paths. As a result, the enhanced stimulation from hearing aids to the parts of the brain responsible for hearing will stimulate growth and development in this area.

A study published in the Journal of American Geriatrics Society determined that wearing hearing aids inhibits cognitive decline in individuals with hearing loss.

Hearing loss also has a tendency to make people withdraw socially. Wearing hearing aids can help you remain socially active and live life to the fullest.



Breaking the Stigma Behind Hearing Loss

The stigma associated with hearing loss can be a big obstacle for individuals who need help hearing better. Some individuals are afraid to take the next step because of how they think their friends, family, or acquaintances may view them. Negative stereotypes and prejudices such as “old age”, poor communicators, social awkwardness, low cognition, etc, have followed hearing loss for many years. While this stigma is not nearly as strong as it was 40 years ago, it is still very present in our society. Interestingly, there seems to be very little stigma associated with vision loss and wearing glasses.

Hearing loss does not only affect those individuals who are “older” in age, it affects infants, children, teens and adults of all ages. Technological advancements have helped to identify newborns with hearing loss within hours of being born and fit with hearing aids by the time they are six months old.

Allowing the stigma of hearing loss to influence the acceptance of help can be detrimental to a person who needs it. Hearing loss is an invisible impairment that individuals try to conceal from others. When hearing loss is concealed, individuals can become increasingly withdrawn from social interaction with family and friends and can lead to depression.

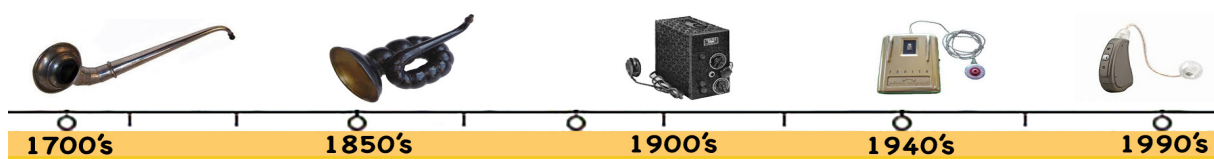
Once someone with hearing loss uses hearing aids, they not only realize how much they were missing, but they start to notice how many other people wear them. Overcoming the stigma associated with hearing loss can be very difficult, especially for someone who has just been diagnosed with a hearing loss. If you are affected by the stigma associated with hearing loss, try to observe how the hearing loss is affecting you at home, work or in leisure time. Weigh the pros and cons of hearing better versus missing out on conversation. Identify the main emotion that holds you back from getting help and address it.

The Progression of Hearing Aids...*from Trumpet to Digital Device.*

Before the 1890's, acoustic hearing devices were made of wood and metal. The earliest hearing aid was a trumpet. At this time commercially produced hearing aids were not available and people who needed them had to design and build their own. They did not amplify sound but worked by collecting sound and "funneling" it through the tube.

In the early 1900's, the first electronic hearing aids were introduced. They were inconvenient contraptions that required people to carry them in a large box, at first the size of a suitcase, connected to a receiver they held to their ears. By 1948, Bell Laboratories invented a much smaller transistor device.

In 1960, Zenith Radio introduced hearing aids closer to what we know today. By the late 20th century, hearing aid manufacturers were able to make transistors out of silicon and shrink the devices even smaller.



Hearing Aid Tips For Your First Few Weeksand Beyond

- **Wear your hearing aids as often as possible.** At first, it can be difficult to get used to the new and unfamiliar sound from your hearing aids. It can be tempting to take them off, but try to get used to the "new" sounds. This will help your ears and brain adjust to the new stimulation and shorten the adjustment period.
- **Give the process time.** Hearing loss is a gradual process that can take place over many years. Regaining your hearing with a hearing aid is faster, but it is not instantaneous. You will need to be patient and give your brain and body time to adjust.
- **Manage your expectations.** One of the biggest misconceptions about hearing aids is the idea they can restore your hearing to the way it was before your hearing loss. Unfortunately, most people wearing hearing aids hear differently than they did before they needed them. This is due to several factors, including damage to the ear and the limits of hearing aid technology.
- **Don't forget to practice.** Practice wearing them in different environments. Start with a quiet place like your own home or library. As you get used to your hearing aids, you can try other environments like restaurants, performances or other public spaces. This will help you acclimate to background noises.

Patient Corner



Hi, my name is Sofia Mirinda and I am 13 years old. I was born with hearing loss and have had hearing aids for over 10 years. My hearing aids make it easier for me to participate in many things such as school, sports and hanging out with my friends. Not to mention they are super comfy. They make my life so much better. And, if I want to tune out my little sister, all I have to do is press a button. I am so grateful: I can't imagine life without them!

How Can I Tell If I Have Hearing Loss?

Do you....

- often ask people to repeat themselves?
- have trouble hearing in groups or loud environments, such as parties and restaurants?
- often think others are mumbling?
- fail to hear someone talking from behind you?
- turn up the volume on the TV or car radio?
- have difficulty hearing on the phone?
- have difficulty hearing at the movies?



May is Better
Hearing & Speech
Month!

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO
SCHEDULE YOUR APPOINTMENT
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69 Union Street
Manchester, VT 05254