



Southern Vermont AUDIOLOGY

total hearing solutions

**October is National
Protect Your Hearing
Month!**

Dear Friends,

I hope this newsletter finds everyone safe and healthy. Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) has changed our world and adjusting to these changes has been challenging to say the least.

Audiology offices are considered essential, so our office has remained open. There is no higher priority for Southern Vermont Audiology than the health and well being of our patients and employees. We realize that many of our patients are among the most vulnerable to diseases like COVID-19 and the flu. We have always had strong safety measures in place, including infection control, and we are now following the Center for Disease and Prevention's (CDC) and the Vermont Department of Health's guidance on COVID-19.

To prevent congestion in our waiting room and to adhere to social distancing measures, please refrain from stopping in the office without calling ahead. When you call, we will schedule a time for your visit. We are also allowing for hearing aids to be dropped off or mailed in for service. If you are in need of supplies, we can mail them to you upon request. We understand the importance of hearing well, especially at this time when communication is so critical.

Stay safe and be well!
Dr. Kathy Lowkes

DID YOU HEAR?

WHAT IS THE COCHLEA?



The organ of hearing in your inner ear. It produces nerve impulses in response to sound vibration, allowing you to hear.

The cochlea is Greek for snail.

It's about the size of pea.

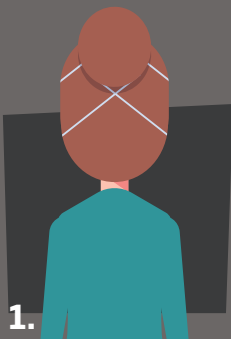
If you unwound the cochlea, it would be about 31mm (1.5 inches long).



Wearing a mask with your hearing aids



Clever tips to protect your ears and hearing aids while wearing a mask



1.

If you have long hair, pull it back into a bun and loop the elastics around the bun.



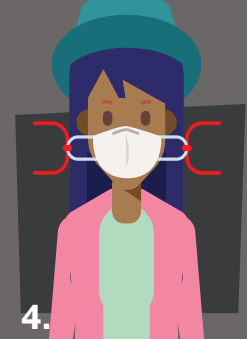
2.

Create a "mask extender" out of fabric or ribbon about 4 inches long. Buttons sewn on either side allows for a place to put the elastic other than your ears.



3.

Sew 2 large buttons onto a soft headband, placing the buttons to line up with each ear. Looping the elastic around each button will take the strain off your ears.



4.

Use masks with string or ribbons that tie in the back. There are YouTube videos on creating masks that tie, which puts absolutely no pressure on the ears.

Communicating when wearing a mask



Speak slowly, clearly and at a normal volume.



Rephrase remarks when not understood.



Take turns when speaking.



Make sure hearing aid users have them on.



Keep background noise in the room to a minimum.



Face each other (at a safe distance).

When removing your mask...

Check to make sure hearing aids are still in place after removing a mask as they may come off with mask removal.





Listen Up & Protect Your Hearing!

During this year's **National Protect Your Hearing Month** learn how to protect yourself and your loved ones from noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL). NIHL occurs when noise damages the tiny hair cells within the cochlea. When hairs cells are damaged, they cannot send information to the brain. **Since people cannot grow new hair cells to replace damaged ones, hearing loss from noise is permanent.**

People of all ages can develop NIHL. **A 2017 study shows that about 13 to 18 percent of teens (ages 12 to 19) have signs of possible NIHL.** Hearing loss from noise may not be obvious at first, but symptoms can build over time. NIHL can make it difficult to communicate with others and to appreciate the sounds of everyday living, such as chirping birds or a crackling fire. Even a small amount of hearing loss can have profound, negative effects on speech, language, comprehension, communication, classroom learning and social development.

Luckily, NIHL is preventable. Southern Vermont Audiology would like to help their patients and families make healthy hearing a habit early on, so that they can avoid NIHL for a lifetime. You can help prevent hearing loss from noise by following these simple lifestyle changes:

- **Turn down the volume.** Keep the volume low on smartphones, tablets, computers, and TVs, and set maximum volume levels on devices used by children and teens. A sounds intensity is measured in decibels. Sounds below 70 A-weighted decibels (dBA) are generally considered safe. Sounds of 85 dBA or above are more likely to put you at risk for NIHL, especially if they last a long time or are repeated.

- **Move away from the noise.** To reduce sound intensity and the impact of noise on your ears, increase the distance between you and the sound.
- **Wear hearing protectors, such as earplugs or earmuffs.** Sometimes you cannot easily escape the sound, whether you are at a movie theater, a concert, a sporting event, or in a noisy work environment. Earplugs or protective earmuffs can help. They can reduce the loudness of sound by 15 to 30 decibels. If you are a parent or grandparent, carry hearing protectors for your little ones and be a healthy hearing role model by wearing them yourself.

Southern Vermont Audiology offers custom earplugs that are molded specifically to fit your ears. Types of custom earplugs include musician, shooting, medical, and communications.

Patient Corner



After I got my hearing aids, I realized how exhausting it had been when I couldn't hear well. With my hearing aids, I can relax and hear things without straining. What a difference!
Dwain W.

COVID-19 AND HEARING LOSS: STRATEGIES AT HOME

- Perform visual daily checks - take a good look at your hearing aids especially the portion that goes in the ear. Check for any wax that might be blocking sound from coming out properly.
- Continue to wear your hearing aids daily. People may be tempted to discontinue wearing their hearing aids because they are not interacting with others as much during COVID-19. This can result in reduced brain stimulation and auditory deprivation. There is always sound around us and hearing is an important component of our overall health.
- Social isolation is something that untreated hearing loss and COVID-19 have in common. Social isolation can lead to depression, cognitive decline, and a lower quality of life. Combat this by wearing your hearing aids, having your hearing evaluated, and staying connected with family and friends through phone calls, Zoom calls, and socially distanced in-person visits.



FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO
SCHEDULE YOUR APPOINTMENT
TODAY, CALL 802 366-8020 OR VISIT US
ONLINE AT WWW.SVTAUDIOLOGY.COM



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