

Hearing Associates
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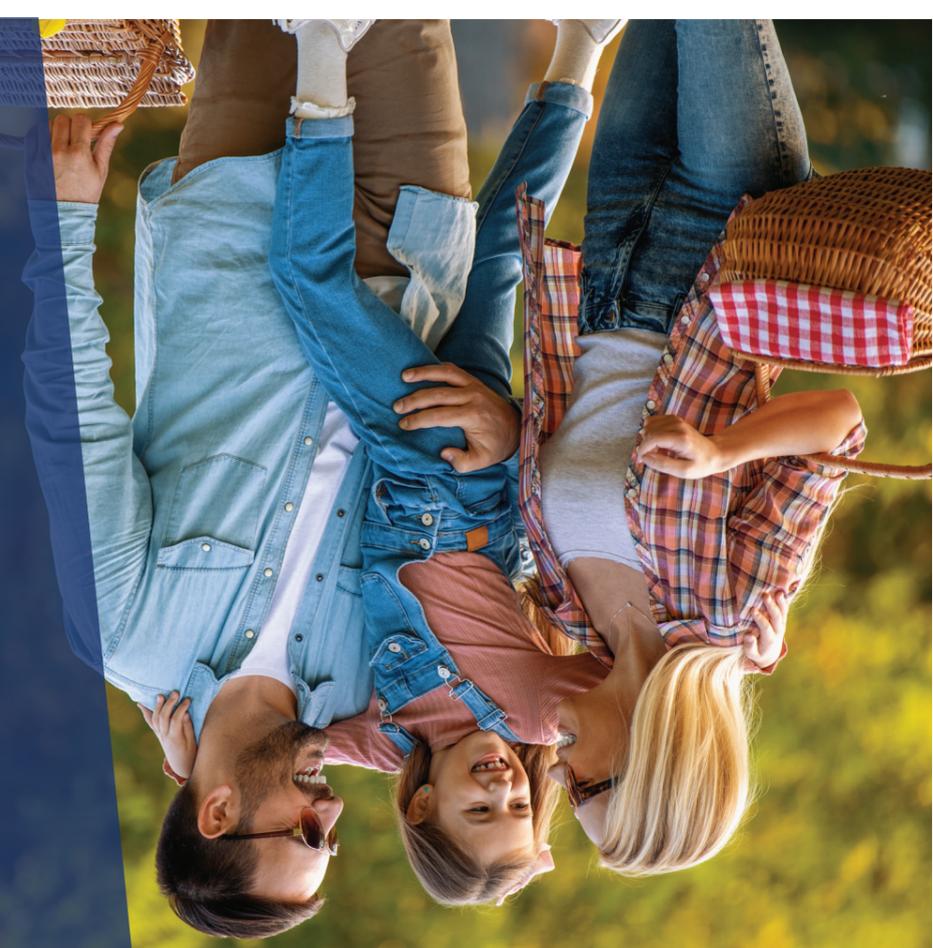
Inside this issue

Six Benefits of Rechargeable Hearing Aids

The Connection Between Diabetes and Hearing Loss

Common Hearing Aid Disasters and How to Avoid Them

Which Brand of Hearing Aid is Best for Me?



Providing excellent customer service & quality hearing aids to our patients since 1987. Hearing Associates, P.C. is your hearing healthcare expert in Mason City, Northern Iowa, and Albert Lea, Minnesota.

**Hear in the
Now News**

Spring 2023



Hear in the Now Announcements

Hearing Associates Spring 2023 Newsletter

Spring into your journey toward better hearing! Read about our team's latest endeavors and exciting opportunities at Hearing Associates.



Reaching Out to Our Community

Members of the Hearing Associates team have concentrated on outreach visits with local groups and organizations around northern Iowa and southeastern Minnesota.

On February 7, some of the Hearing Associates' team went to Lake Plaza Apartments, a senior living community in Clear Lake, Iowa. We talked about hearing loss and enjoyed meeting the residents.



Dr. Bryce Phillips talked to a local youth group on February 16 about audiology, how hearing works and how to prevent hearing loss.



And on March 8, we joined the Mason City Moms of Preschoolers to discuss how hearing impacts learning in young children.

Test Your Hearing for a Cause

During April and May, we will donate \$20 to Dolly Parton's Imagination Library for every patient who gets a hearing screening. A portion of each hearing aid sale in April and May will also go to that organization.

The Imagination Library gifts books to children from birth to age five to inspire a love of reading and creativity.

This is the 15th charitable organization Hearing Associates has partnered with, and we're excited to participate in Dolly Parton's cause. Over the years, our donations have ranged from \$4,000 to \$15,000. We're proud to support organizations that improve the lives of our community members and look forward to new opportunities in the future.



Common Hearing Aid Disasters and How to Avoid Them

Whether you accidentally drop your devices or get them wet, you can take steps to mitigate damage and prevent it from happening again.

You Lose Your Hearing Aids

1. Check their location if you have them connect to a hearing aid app.
2. Search your surroundings and retrace your steps.
3. If you're in public, report your devices to security and leave your contact information.
3. Ask your audiologist if the manufacturer offers a warranty to cover replacements.

How to avoid it:

- Don't remove your hearing aids in public.
- Be careful removing face masks, hats and glasses.
- Schedule a fitting if your devices aren't snug.

Your Hearing Aids Get Wet

1. Remove the battery and leave the compartment open.
2. Remove any tubing and gently shake your devices to release moisture.
3. Dry them with a fan or hair dryer on a low, cool setting.
4. Leave your devices to dry or put them in a dehumidifier and add new batteries in the morning.
5. Contact your audiologist if your hearing aids malfunction.

How to avoid it:

- Wear a hat or carry an umbrella during inclement weather.
- Store your hearing aids when bathing or swimming.
- Don't remove hearing aids over the sink.

You Drop Your Hearing Aids Outside

1. Check your devices for damage, cracks and debris.
2. Wash your hands before cleaning your hearing aids.
3. Wipe your devices with a cloth and use cotton swabs to clean mics, ports and battery compartments.
4. Wipe your hearing aids with a non-alcohol-based disinfectant.

How to avoid it:

- Only remove your hearing aids over soft surfaces.
- Wear hearing aid clips or headbands during physical activity.
- Secure your hearing aids before you leave your house or vehicle.

Your Pet Chews Your Hearing Aid

1. Gently dislodge your devices from your pet's mouth and check for batteries or broken pieces.
2. Look for damage before you disinfect your devices.
3. Place hearing aids in a dehumidifier.
4. Put in new batteries.
5. Contact your audiologist if your devices have been damaged beyond repair, and seek emergency medical assistance if your pet swallowed a battery.

How to avoid it:

- Store your devices out of your pet's reach.
- Be mindful of your pet while putting in or removing your hearing aids.
- Don't leave your devices unattended.

Six Benefits of Rechargeable Hearing Aids

The lithium-ion batteries in rechargeable hearing aids provide long-lasting power to support multiple features. This battery lasts for several years before it needs replacing.

A Full Day of Hearing Aid Power

Rechargeable hearing aids have a docking station to charge the devices overnight. Hearing aids that use disposable batteries must be replaced a few times a week, especially if you stream audio or use other special features. Rechargeable batteries power your devices without draining quickly. That provides convenience and peace of mind knowing your hearing aids will work all day.

Easy to Use

Opening battery compartments and handling small batteries can be difficult if you have dexterity issues, arthritis or a health condition that causes tremors. The lithium-ion batteries in rechargeable hearing aids aren't removable, so you don't have to worry about losing or replacing them.

Long-Term Use and Savings

The batteries in rechargeable hearing aids last roughly five to seven years and are made with materials that prevent premature wear to optimize the length of use. They can cost more upfront, but it's important to remember they offer long-term savings. Disposable hearing aid batteries must be replaced often, and that expense can add up over a year.

Eco-Friendly Batteries

Disposable batteries generate waste. Most end up in landfills and contain lead, mercury, acid and other chemicals that can leech into the ground, impacting soil and water quality. Buying rechargeable hearing aids reduces battery waste. Hearing Associates also has a battery recycling program for hearing aids that use disposable batteries.

Eliminate Choking Hazards

Disposable batteries contain chemicals that are extremely dangerous if ingested. Young children and pets could easily get their hands on your hearing aid batteries if you don't secure them out of reach. Rechargeable hearing aids eliminate that problem because the battery is built into the hearing device.

Moisture Resistant

The sealed battery compartment of rechargeable hearing aids helps keep moisture out and reduces the risk of battery corrosion. Most rechargeable hearing aids have an Ingress Protection 67 rating. IP measures how well a hearing aid keeps out debris and moisture, with IP68 being the highest rating. Rechargeable hearing aids are relatively protected if you accidentally get them wet or drop them in less than one meter of water.



The Connection Between Diabetes and Hearing Loss

Diabetes and hearing loss are common comorbidities. In fact, you're twice as likely to experience hearing loss if you have diabetes.

How Diabetes Impacts Your Ears

Hearing loss: High blood sugar damages blood vessels in your inner ear, while low blood sugar affects how nerve signals travel from your ears to your brain. Diabetes negatively impacts circulation to your ears, causing the nerves to sustain permanent damage or die.

Tinnitus: This condition is characterized by ringing, humming or buzzing in your ears. It's a common hearing loss symptom associated with damage to the ear's blood vessels.

Ear infections: High blood sugar and poor circulation can result in frequent infections. Diabetes also makes earwax less acidic, so it's less effective at combatting bacteria.

Imbalance: Your inner ear houses the vestibular system, which helps you maintain balance. Because diabetes affects the nerves and blood flow to your inner ear, you may struggle to stay balanced. That increases your risk of fall-related injuries.

When to See an Audiologist

Visiting an audiologist as soon as possible is important if you suspect hearing issues. It's not unusual for your family and friends to notice your hearing loss before you.

Common signs of hearing loss include:

- Trouble keeping up with group conversations
- Frequently asking others to repeat themselves
- Turning up the TV or radio to excessive volumes
- Struggling to hear phone conversations

The Importance of Treating Hearing Loss

Your brain requires constant activity to stay healthy. Living with untreated hearing loss deprives your brain's auditory cortex of the proper stimulation to process audio, making it difficult for your brain to understand sounds even if you wear hearing aids. Eventually, your brain will compensate for the loss of function, which can increase your cognitive load and risk of dementia.

How to Manage Your Diabetes and Protect Your Hearing

- Schedule a yearly hearing evaluation to monitor your hearing health.
- Ask your primary physician about setting health goals for your A1C, blood pressure and cholesterol.
- Eliminate tobacco to avoid diabetes complications and further hearing damage.
- Provide a complete list of medications for your audiologist; some may be ototoxic and affect your ears.
- Avoid loud noises and wear hearing protection in noisy environments.

Which Brand of Hearing Aid is Best for Me?

It's important to consider factors such as your degree of hearing loss, budget, features, visibility preferences and warranties when selecting a hearing aid brand.



Oticon specializes in making devices for severe to profound hearing loss. The company created the Deep Neural Network to stimulate the brain and help it interpret sounds. Connect your Oticon hearing aids to their app to change your settings from your phone.



Starkey hearing aids are made to fit comfortably in your ears. Their devices have artificial intelligence that learns from your environment. This brand also includes Bluetooth connectivity, so you can stream calls, shows and other audio. The health-tracking features and fall-detection software can improve safety and wellness.



Phonak is known for producing discreet devices that support hearing in challenging listening environments. Phonak offers excellent rechargeable hearing aid options that provide up to 24 hours of power on a three-hour charge. Their product line includes speech-enhancing technology and noise-cancellation features.



ReSound hearing aids have impressive features, like Bluetooth connectivity and directional hearing technology. The advanced listening software is designed to reduce sound distortion and is compatible with iOS and Android devices for remote adjustments.



This hearing aid is nearly invisible to the naked eye. The Lyric is placed in your ear canal for several months. These devices offer natural sound quality without the need to adjust or change batteries.



You can upgrade your Unitron devices if your hearing needs change. This brand offers Bluetooth features for behind-the-ear and in-the-ear devices. Unitron hearing aids have powerful speech enhancement features and directional microphones.



Signia devices are suitable for mild to profound and unilateral hearing loss. Signia hearing aids are known for their slim design and are available in five skin tones. The myHearing and myControl apps allow you to connect and adjust your hearing aids from a smart device.



Widex software remembers environments and automatically adjusts. Their tinnitus treatment is called Widex Zen Therapy and consists of counseling, amplification, fractal zones and relaxation. The tones can be customized to your specific symptoms to provide a calming experience and soothe the stress caused by the ringing in your ears.