

Hearing Associates
250 South Crescent Drive, Suite 100
Mason City, IA 50401



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**Hear in the Now
Announcements**

Hearing Associates Gifts Hearing Aids to Honor Gary Dockum

We hosted a contest in May for people to enter for a chance to win pairs of ReSound ONE Premium Rechargeable hearing aids. We're excited to announce Tina Montealvo and Dave Snider were selected as the two lucky winners!

Gary Dockum founded Hearing Associates and was dedicated to bringing better hearing to his community. In addition to gifting two pairs of hearing aids, \$1,500 each was donated to the Iowa Speech-Language-Hearing Foundation and Rock Falls Community Center from hearing aid sales in May to honor Gary's memory.

Pictured: Stuart Trembath and Dave Snider



People with hearing loss share how
Hearing aids changed their life 

"Life is too short to only catch parts of what is happening around you."

"My life has definitely changed for the better!"

"I've been able to hear with clarity."

"The hearing aids have improved my quality of life in ways I would not have believed."

"Your hearing is a precious gift, don't take it for granted."

Real stories from reviews left on our website.

READY TO GET HELP?

Visit **Hearing Associates MC.com**

to learn more or schedule a consultation



**Hear in the
Now News**

Summer 2022

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.

The Hearing Associates Team Welcomes Two New Members

We welcome Dr. Caroline Cross and Hearing Specialist Breanna Billings to Hearing Associates!

Dr. Cross received her Clinical Doctorate in Audiology at the University of Iowa and discovered audiology while she studied speech-language pathology. She loves working with older adults and specializes in hearing conversion and hearing protection education.

Breanna was motivated to pursue higher education after witnessing how hearing loss affected people's activity and participation levels. She earned her Bachelor of Arts in Communication Sciences and Disorders from the University of Northern Iowa.

They are both looking forward to helping patients improve their hearing health!



The Stigma Surrounding Hearing Aids is Changing

Some people still worry about the stigma associated with wearing hearing aids despite advances in modern hearing technology. The incorrect association may be based on outdated perceptions about how hearing devices look. However, that stigma is changing as more people learn how hearing devices can improve their quality of life.

The Presence of Hearing Loss

Hearing loss is often considered a problem for "older people." The truth is hearing loss affects people of all ages. About 35% of American adults 65 and older have hearing loss, but approximately 15% of adults 18 and older report some trouble hearing.

The ever-growing use of headphones and earbuds also raises the likelihood of children developing hearing loss, and hearing aids are becoming a common sight among children, teens and adults.

Advances in Hearing Aid Technology

One misconception is that hearing aids only amplify volume. Today's hearing aids act as miniature computers that filter, process and clarify audio. Digital hearing aid technology is more sophisticated than its predecessors.

You can buy hearing aids with programs to suit your unique hearing needs. Some styles have settings that automatically adjust to new surroundings. Directional microphones reduce background noise and make it easier to hear conversations. Bluetooth hearing aids connect wirelessly to compatible smartphones, tablets, televisions and computers, so you can stream audio into your hearing devices.

Discreet Designs

Some hearing aid styles are nearly invisible to the naked eye. Behind-the-ear (BTE) and receiver-in-the-canal (RIC) hearing aids come in slimmer designs and skin tones that make them more discreet. In-the-canal (ITC) devices sit flush against the shell of your ear, and completely-in-canal (CIC) hearing aids fit in your ear canal.

Environmental Accommodations

Increased education has contributed to the availability of assistive listening devices in public spaces. Telecoil hearing aids connect to hearing loops in public buildings and improve your listening experience. You can find hearing loops in movie theatres, concert halls, auditoriums, performance spaces and places of worship.

Advocating for your needs can help you become more aware of discriminatory behavior. Certain laws protect you against ableism discrimination in the workplace, and your employer must provide the tools you need to succeed, regardless of your hearing ability. That may include closed captions on video conferences or written materials to help you follow along during a presentation.



Top 5 Benefits of Wearing Custom Earplugs

Custom hearing protection provides you with the right design to suit your unique physical and acoustic requirements.

Suited for Your Ear Shape and Needs

Custom earplugs are made specifically for your ears. Audiologists take molds of your ears to craft a set of earplugs that fit comfortably in your ears.

Custom hearing protection is a good option if you have unusually shaped ear canals, are sensitive to discomfort or have allergies to certain materials. Audiologists will also consider the purpose of your custom earplugs and can add features like safety straps.

Compact and Durable

Custom earplugs fit securely in your ear canal. You won't have to worry about getting them tangled with earrings, glasses, helmets, masks and other accessories. The high-quality material withstands wear and tear during work and play. Disposable earplugs are only good for a couple of uses before they must be replaced.

Better Protection from Hearing Damage

Custom hearing protection is better suited to protect your ears from dangerous noise levels because it's designed for your specific ear shape. They block daily sounds such as construction, traffic, emergency sirens and music.

Disposable earplugs dull and distort sounds. Custom earplugs improve communication because they block background noise without muffling all sounds.

Cost-Effective

Custom hearing protection costs more upfront than disposable earplugs, but they last longer. You won't have to worry about replacing your earplugs regularly if you have custom protection because you can wear them repeatedly, saving you money in the long run.

Lower Risk of Ear Infections

The spongy foam or rubber of disposable earplugs holds bacteria, especially if you reuse them. That puts you at risk for painful ear infections. Custom earplugs are made with a special coating that prevents bacterial growth.

Types of Custom Hearing Protection

Custom earbuds: These compact-style earplugs fit your ear shape and sit snugly in your ear canal. They filter background noise, so you don't have to crank the volume.

Musician earplugs: These earplugs are available in standard and digital styles. You're protected from dangerous noise levels without blocking the sounds you need to hear to perform.

Shooting earplugs: These protective devices amplify sounds within a safe hearing range. Digital options automatically block noise exceeding 95 decibels.

Swimmer earplugs: Swim molds keep your ears dry while you're in the water, lowering your risk for Swimmer's Ear and moisture damage.



5 Earwax Removal Myths Debunked

There's plenty of confusion surrounding ear hygiene, particularly ear wax removal. Here are five common ear wax removal myths.

#1 You Should Remove Your Ear Wax Daily

Your ears clean themselves. The inner ear is the site of ear wax production. Earwax is initially semi-liquid and pushes into the outer ear. The natural flow collects dead cells and debris along the way. Eventually, it flows out of your ears whether you clean them or not.

#2 Cotton Swabs Are the Best Ways to Remove Ear Wax

Most common over-the-counter solutions contain hydrogen peroxide, which can be used to break up ear wax. After you've softened the ear wax, you should only clean the outer portion of your ears with a cotton swab. Never stick an object into your ear canal.

#3 Doctors Recommend Candles

The belief behind candling is that the flame's heat generates a vacuum pressure, which sucks out your ear wax. There's no scientific basis for that, and otolaryngologists have found the practice can cause ear wax to build up to the point of consolidation. You also run the risk of burning your skin from heated wax.

#4 Using Ear Drops Every Day Cleans Your Ears

While hydrogen peroxide-based drops can help clean your ears, using them daily is neither necessary nor beneficial. Since ear wax naturally flows outward, you don't need to apply ear drops every day to clean your ears.

#5 Only a General Practitioner Can Remove Ear Wax

You don't need to see your general practitioner for ear wax removal. Anybody qualified to treat ear conditions and hearing impairment can remove ear wax. The bonus of seeing specialists is the expert advice you can receive, whether it involves ear wax removal or other ear-related issues, like Tinnitus treatment.

The Verdict

The ears, like many other organs in your body, have a way of regulating themselves. Many interventions for ear wax removal are unnecessary, harmful or both. For example, if done incorrectly, ear irrigating can result in a perforated ear drum. That's why it's important to seek professional treatment if you suspect you have excess or compacted ear wax.