

Communication  
What this means for  
your child's future

Music and hearing  
Prolonging your  
exposure

How to manage  
Know how your  
hearing aid works

**MEDIA  
PLANET**

May 2013

# HEARING HEALTH



## **Steve Aiken**

President of  
the Canadian  
Academy of  
Audiology  
educates how  
you don't hear  
from your ears



## **Infants of Toronto**

What parents  
can do to  
support  
their infant's  
language  
development



# PARENTS ARE THE KEY TO DEVELOPING THEIR CHILDREN'S LANGUAGE

**Kathy Ireland** discusses how hearing loss shouldn't  
be seen as a barrier, but as a new way for connecting.

## CHALLENGES

Taking the initial steps to better understand how your ears and brain work together will **help you to be more proactive about your hearing.**

# Manage your hearing before your hearing manages you

For many people, the process of hearing is automatic. Our ears are on all the time as we navigate through a world that is literally pulsating with sound. Each day we engage with a wide range of people and are beset with any number of complex and challenging communication scenarios. But for those of us with typical hearing, we are generally wired to handle it all. Our ears and our brains work in tandem to manage practically any listening situation that is put before us in order to ferret out the intended message.

## Statistics

This is not how it works for everyone. Up to 27 percent of adults have some degree of hearing loss. This percentage dramatically increases as we age with 44 percent of those 60-69 years and 66 percent of those 70-79 years being affected. Research links untreated hearing loss to depression, isolation, loneliness, withdrawal, anger and fatigue. All

of which extract a significant toll causing stress for the individual and strain on their relationships with others.

## Noise Induced Hearing Loss

A full third of hearing loss is noise induced and preventable. To prevent noise induced hearing loss, I recommend the Remove — Reduce — Rest strategy. The first line of defense is to remove as much noise as possible from the environment and reduce the amount of noise that enters into the listening space. Following exposure to loud noise, auditory rest is crucial for allowing the hearing system an opportunity to recover. Use hearing protection whenever necessary.

Preventing noise or music induced hearing loss is particularly important for teens and young adults. Statistics suggest a trend that the signs of hearing loss are occurring at younger and younger ages. It is easy to take the sense of hearing for granted and ignore symptoms of hearing loss since they are generally not associated



**Rex Banks,**  
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Reg. CASLPO  
Chief Audiologist  
and Director  
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Healthcare,  
The Canadian  
Hearing Society

with pain. Noise-induced hearing loss occurs gradually over time and goes virtually unnoticed until it's too late.

## Prevention

Here's some good news, if you do have hearing loss, it can be managed. In fact, 90 percent of people with hearing loss can improve communication with properly fitted hearing instruments, rehabilitative counseling and education. Although hearing instruments are an imperfect solution to a complicated problem, they have come light years in terms of the technologies and features that are available now compared to the past. Check with your audiologist as

you just might be surprised what you'll learn about today's hearing instruments.

## Early detection

Early detection is the key. It has been reported that individuals with hearing loss often wait 6 to 10 years before they seek help during which time the impact of hearing loss increases. Screening is recommended in order to diagnose hearing loss at an earlier stage. Once identified, annual retesting is a good idea as hearing loss typically progresses with age. The more you manage your hearing loss, the less it will manage you!

If you are reading this report, you have taken an important first step to better understanding your hearing, how to protect and manage any hearing loss that you may have now or in the future. I invite you to explore each page and discover the wonders of the miraculous sense of hearing.

**REX BANKS**

editorial@mediaplanet.com

FACT

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MANY HEARING AIDS CAN CONNECT TO YOUR MOBILE PHONE USING BLUETOOTH™ TECHNOLOGY



WE RECOMMEND



**Music and hearing**

Learning how to protect your ears while enjoying music

PAGE 11

**MEDIA  
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# PANEL OF EXPERTS



**1. What steps can family members take to ensure seniors are getting their hearing checked regularly?**

**I think the most important thing** we can do is help them become aware that getting their hearing checked regularly should be included as part of their annual physical. Many family physicians encourage this but it can be overlooked. It is recommended to include a hearing check beginning at the age of 50, or earlier if a problem is suspected. Even if a hearing loss is not a major concern, establishing a baseline is very beneficial and allows you and the hearing professional to track changes over time.



**Jillian Price, M.Sc, Aud (C), Reg. CASLPO**  
Chief Audiologist, Central and Eastern Canada,  
ListenUP! Canada

**2. Are there different ways we can communicate with those who are hard of hearing to help remove communication barriers?**

**Absolutely!** The best way to improve someone's ability to hear you better is to make sure they can see your face. Lip reading is a skill we all use every day but are unaware we are even doing it. Another great tip is to always make sure that you have their attention before you start a conversation. Speak clearly and slow it down a bit. Shouting is never recommended and will not help someone with hearing loss to hear you any better. Try to keep your voice at a constant level. Lastly, try to reduce or remove any background noise.

**3. What symptoms should someone look out for in regards to potential hearing loss? Who should they seek guidance from?**

**One of the earliest** signs of hearing loss is difficulty hearing with background noise. Having to ask people to repeat themselves frequently is another common sign that some hearing loss may be present. With age related hearing loss, having difficulty hearing women and children is very common. This is due to the inability to hear higher pitched sounds. If you or someone you know is experiencing any of these symptoms, having your hearing checked by a qualified hearing professional is the first step to take. A hearing assessment takes about an hour and is painless.

**The first step** is to find a hearing healthcare professional in your area. Search via yellow pages or Google, or try an application such as uHear for an iPhone, iPad or iPod touch. This application will screen your hearing in 12 minutes, provide results about your hearing abilities and links to find hearing healthcare professional in your area. Once you connect with them, they will conduct a thorough evaluation and discuss the results with you as well as planning for a treatment or your next hearing checkup.



**Adriana Galvis**  
Corporate Audiologist,  
Unitron

**The best approach** is to ensure you are looking at the listener and making eye contact prior to talking. Your voice projects better when in front of the listener and they can also use your gestures, visual-facial cues and lip reading to complete the message. It is also helpful to not speak too quickly, pronounce your words clearly and allow time for them to fully comprehend the conversation. If they don't understand, rephrase a sentence rather than simply repeating it or speaking loudly with exaggerated speech. If possible, try to remove background noise such as the TV or dishwasher.

**The signs** of a potential hearing problem may include: continuously asking others to repeat what was said; listening to TV and radio louder than others; providing answers that are out of context; feeling isolated and no longer participating in conversations, particularly in groups; having communication issues at school or work, and/or experiencing pain or discomfort in your ears. Everyone should have their hearing tested once a year. Hearing loss is not always related to age. It is important to contact a certified hearing healthcare professional for an assessment and to plan future actions.



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If you have hearing aids now, and are not hearing well, let us help! You may just need an adjustment!

If you are starting to notice a decline in your hearing, we understand. If you think your hearing may have changed and would like to find out for sure, come to The Hearing Clinic and speak to a hearing healthcare professional. We will do everything we can to help you maximize your communication. Don't miss out on the amazing sounds your life has to offer you!

Ask about our Battery Club Membership, available with select hearing aid purchases.

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## INSIGHT

## → HOW I MADE IT

## My Journey

**I was born with bilateral profound sensorineural hearing loss in the early 1970s.**

My parents were from Italy, and their first spoken and written languages were their regional Italian dialect. I was formally diagnosed and fitted with hearing aids before the age of 2. I soon started speech therapy and my mother learned English in order to be able follow the sessions.

I went to the Metro Toronto School for the Deaf and then was mainstreamed in kindergarten at our local school near our home at the age of 4. There were language and hearing hurdles to overcome being the only deaf child in that school, but with the consistent support of my parents and the teachers from the district and involvement with VOICE for Hearing Impaired Children, I made it through elementary and junior high school.

### Moving forward

To add to my journey, Giovanni, my son, was born deaf and we found out the day after he was born. The doctors did sensorial testing and it was found that he was not responsive to sound.

One month later, Giovanni was retested, and again he was not responsive. I remember that day,



Marina Barnum with her husband and son, who are also hard of hearing. PHOTO: MARINA BARNUM

as emotional as it was; I knew he would need the same, or more, of what I had received growing up. The only difference was that we were both deaf parents and we sometimes are not the best people to “acquire” the best in sound. So shortly after he was fitted with hearing aids he began receiving early intervention services which started with speech once a week and a teacher of the deaf.

He is already typing three letter words on the computer; he knows his numbers by heart up to 20 and all the colours and letters. He can identify many animals and things in his environment and is saying three to four word signed sentences in correct English order.

After a challenging start, we are confident that he is finding his way.

MARINA R. BARNUM

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# YOU DON'T HEAR WITH YOUR EARS!

## YOUR NEXT STEPS

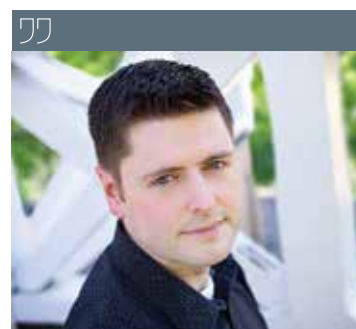
Would you believe that we don't hear with our ears? We hear *through* our ears, but this is not where hearing happens. So where does it happen? Point to your ears, and then move your fingers about two inches up.

Your hearing system starts at the little holes on the sides of your head, but most of the heavy lifting is done by your brain, right where you're pointing. Sounds collected by the ear are meaningless until the brain sorts them into meaningful pieces: the words of someone important in your life, music that warms the soul, birds chirping on a summer morning, or some important piece of news or information.

The hearing part of the brain is also deeply connected with the parts of the brain that handle language, memory and emotion. Your hearing connects you to the world in a very special way.

### Hearing with the brain

Why does this matter? Hearing problems are not just problems with the ears, and they shouldn't be taken lightly. When the hearing part of the brain stops getting the information it needs from the ears, it changes in ways that can be devastating. It starts to reorganize in



Dr. Steve Aiken, PhD  
President, Canadian Academy of Audiology; Assistant Professor, Surgery, Psychology and Neuroscience, Dalhousie University

“When you lose your hearing, you lose part of your connection to the world: to your environment, to your family, to your friends, to everything that's important.”

ways that make it difficult to make sense of sound, and these brain changes are likely the main cause of ringing-in-the-ear.

It gets worse: hearing loss has recently been found to be strongly associated with dementia. When you lose your hearing, you lose part of your connection to the world — to your environment, to your family, to your friends, to everything that's important.

### Visit an Audiologist

If this is happening to you or to someone who's important to you, don't just let it happen. Visit your audiologist. Your audiologist will provide a complete hearing assessment, explain all of your treatment options, and work with you to find the best solution. This could include hearing aids or other helpful devices, implants, counseling to help you adapt to new hearing experiences, listening exercises, a visit to an otologist (a medical-surgical specialist), or treatment for ringing-in-the-ear.

Remember: you hear with your brain, not your ears, and as the old adage says, ‘use it or lose it.’ Don't lose your connection to life!

DR. STEVE AIKEN, PHD

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## INSIGHT

One of the most important things to focus on in regards to your ears is not only knowing your options but how to manage your hearing loss as well. Learn the **benefits of wearing hearing aids, tips to manage your hearing loss and how to be adaptable once you have experienced this loss.**

FACT

2

SOME HEARING AIDS CAN AUTOMATICALLY ADAPT TO YOUR LISTENING ENVIRONMENTS TO PROVIDE THE BEST POSSIBLE SOUND

# Learning how to manage your hearing loss

### Benefits of a hearing aids

There are so many benefits to hearing aids that I can't capture them all here but I would like to highlight what I believe are some of the more significant ones. The most important benefit of hearing aids is better hearing. Once hearing is improved, so many other benefits follow.

People who wear hearing aids often describe the benefits as life changing and they really are because they allow people with hearing loss to reconnect with people and conversations in situations where they couldn't participate before. This leads to better engagement with the people and sounds they love which means better relationships, reduced risk of depression and better physical health.

The benefits of hearing aids are huge and impact your quality of life today and in the future.

### Manage your hearing loss

Hearing loss usually happens gradually. Consequently, it becomes more common as we get older. In fact, by the time we reach 65, at least 50 percent of us will have some degree of hearing loss.

The gradual nature of the development of hearing loss poses one of its biggest challenges. Humans have a great capacity to adapt and many of us apply this capacity very effectively during the early stages of hearing loss.

We are often unaware of the many adaptations we make to allow ourselves to handle early hearing loss;

"The benefits of hearing aids are huge and impact your quality of life today and in the future."



**MJ Desousa**  
Audiologist  
and Director of  
Professional Practice,  
Connect Hearing  
Canada

we slowly start avoiding noisier situations, we find ourselves more fatigued after social gatherings than before, we ask people to repeat more often or don't and just nod and smile and hope that's an appropriate response.

### Adaptations

These "adaptations" mean we've changed our lifestyle to one where we aren't as engaged or connected as we

once were. Although, we don't have to accept these changes. Help for hearing loss is easier than ever before.

Since we all want to stay connected to our worlds through our hearing in unique ways, it is critical to find a hearing professional who will take the time to discover what combination of sounds and situations mean the most to you. Only by doing this, can we ensure we get the right hearing aid technology that will help you reconnect with what "speaks" to you.

Hearing is so important because it helps us stay connected to each other and to the world around us. Take care of your hearing and find a hearing professional that will take care of you!

**MJ DESOUSA**

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## DOES EVERYONE MUMBLE?



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Connect Hearing

## NEWS

## ! CHECK THIS OUT

## Tips from the Ontario Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists

### To hear better:

- Control the environment you're in
- Use visual cues
- Repeat and rephrase

### To get your message across:

- Consider how you speak
- In groups, take turns speaking
- Use additional modes of communication ie. written

SOURCE: OSLA

editorial@mediaplanet.com

# What does communication mean to you?

## Communication is an integral aspect of our lives, and children start learning these skills from birth.

Communication includes understanding and speaking language, as well as knowledge of facial expressions, gestures, and social skills. With the infant hearing program, most babies' hearing is screened at birth or shortly thereafter to rule out potential hearing deficits that can interfere with language learning.

### Teaching your children

Parents are their children's first and best teachers. As children develop, parents should be involved in their child's play, adding language to the face to face interactions. Talking throughout

the day to the child, using short complete sentences that describe what the child is seeing and doing, is another good strategy.

### Tips for parents

Parents should be watching that their child shows interest in interacting with them, and a response to their name being called by around 12 months. They may also start to point, or wave "bye bye" at this age. Single

words should start to appear by 12 to 15 months. By 18 months children have around 20 words that they use, and they can follow simple directions. This is also the time that children are having their 18 month well baby visits.

If a parent has any concerns, they should call one of the Preschool Speech and Language programs in Ontario for an assessment. Early intervention is key, and it is never too early to start.

### What is an SLP?

A Speech-Language Pathologist will assess a child to determine strengths and challenges for the child's age, and then provide different strategies to help the child meet his/her goals.

As parents play a critical role in the intervention, they will be given the tools they need to create a language-rich environment throughout their daily interactions with their child.

Without intervention, the long-term effects for children with speech and language issues can be significant, with many later facing academic and social challenges.



A CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT  
The formative years are the most important.

NANCY CHISHOLM

editorial@mediaplanet.com

**Don't Wait and See**

**with a child's development!**

### By 18 MONTHS, a child should be able to:

- Point to at least three body parts when asked
- Enjoy being read to and identify pictures in a book
- Say 20 words or more
- Demonstrate some pretend play with toys
- Use a variety of familiar gestures e.g. waving, reaching up
- Show affection for people, pets or toys
- Walk on their own
- Look at you when you are talking or playing together
- Hold, bite and chew crackers or other crunchy foods
- Stack three or more blocks

The first years of life have a huge impact on a child's ability to learn at school. Ask a doctor or nurse practitioner about The Enhanced 18 Month Well Baby Visit. **If you have questions about a child's development, please call:**

- Toronto Public Health.....416-338-7600
- CITYKIDS .....416-920-6543
- Toronto Preschool Speech and Language Services (0-5 years of age).....416-338-8255

## + FAST FACTS

SOURCE: CASLPA

editorial@mediaplanet.com

The cost of untreated  
**HEARING LOSS**

VERSUS

The value of  
**HEARING AIDS**

**1 in 10**  
people have  
a hearing loss.



**90%**  
of those with hearing  
loss could benefit from  
hearing aids.



Only **1 in 5**  
who could benefit  
from a hearing aid  
uses one.

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## NEWS

# ENSURING THE PUBLIC RECEIVES QUALITY CARE

### SPEECH DEVELOPMENT

The College of Audiologists and Speech Language Pathologists of Ontario (CASLPO) is the regulatory agency that ensures the public receives high quality care from those practicing as Speech Language Pathologists and Audiologists. Members of these professions make assessments and offer treatments concerning communication disorders. It's important that the public has access to proper care.

Speech Language Pathologists (SLP) work with adults who may experience difficulty talking or understanding speech, following a stroke or other brain injury resulting, for example, from a fall or motor vehicle accident. SLPs also offer their services to children and

adults who have difficulties swallowing or who stutter, or who have voice or speech fluency disorders.

### Professionals for hearing

Audiologists treat patients with hearing problems. They are involved in the prevention, identification, assessment, treatment and rehabilitation of both adults and children experiencing hearing difficulties. They also treat conditions such as tinnitus (ringing in the ears). Only an audiologist or a physician is allowed to prescribe hearing aids in Ontario.

Audiologists also assess and test a person's hearing and dispense and fit hearing aids and other assistive devices, and show people how to use them. They counsel people on how to prevent the loss of hearing. You



**SAY "AHH"**  
Speech Language Pathologist is using fibroscopy to examine a person's vocal cords and how they are working when producing a sound. PHOTO: TYSON DESIGN

do not need a referral from a family doctor to see an audiologist. Funding assistance in the purchase of hearing aids is often available through the Ministry of Health and Long-Term

Care's Assistive Devices Program (ADP), and audiologists can assist people in obtaining such assistance.

A list of all SLPs and Audiologists licensed to practice by the College

is available. Both Audiologists and SLPs undergo extensive clinical training and must obtain Master's degrees before they can be licensed.

As what they can do has a potential risk of harm for patients, SLPs and Audiologists are self-regulated under provincial legislation. Each year they must register with the College in order to be licensed. The College ensures that they have the appropriate skills and that they maintain them at a high level. Complaints about the services which they provide are addressed.

Self-regulation is a privilege. Regulation is in the public interest so that the best possible care can be provided.

**BRIAN O'RIORDAN**  
REGISTRAR, CASLPO

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CASLPO

## protecting the public

## College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario



Registration



Complaints

Quality Assurance



Professional Practice



Regulating and setting standards for professional excellence in audiology and speech language pathology services

**Do you or does someone you love have a hearing or a speech language problem?**

Regulated professionals providing care abide by a code of ethics and high standards of practice. To provide public protection for you and your family, the College establishes and enforces professional standards for:

- **Registration:**  
Sets rigorous educational requirements and works with universities to ensure programs cover the core competencies
- **Professional Practice:**  
Develops and enforces standards of practice to which all audiologists and speech-language pathologists adhere
- **Quality Assurance:**  
Requires audiologists and speech-language pathologists to upgrade their knowledge and skills on a regular basis
- **Complaints:**  
Responds to complaints from the public concerning care delivered

**Be an informed patient**

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Vicky Papaioannou, President  
Brian O'Riordan, Registrar

www.caslpo.com



The College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario regulates in the public interest those who offer audiology and speech-language pathology care.

## INSIGHT

# 10 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT HEARING AIDS

## 1. There are many different styles

Have you ever heard of the many different styles of hearing aids? There are CICs, ITCs, RICs, BTEs and ITEs. These acronyms describe the different 'looks' of a hearing aid.

Some are larger and some are smaller. Some go deep into the ear and some go behind the ear. Some are more noticeable and many are invisible! Each style has its own features and benefits and is chosen depending on a particular patient's wants and needs.

## 2. There are different levels of technology

Just as hearing aids come in different styles, they also come in different levels of technology. What separates the higher from the lower models is that the higher models are programmed with more sophisticated technol-

ogy. Therefore, two hearing aids that look the same can sound considerably different if they are different models.

It's what's on the inside that counts! The technology that is appropriate for you will depend on your hearing loss, your lifestyle and your budget.

They take  
{some}  
TIME TO GET  
used to.

## 4. They have trial periods

Most hearing aid companies and clinics will offer you a trial period of up to 3 months. While some

clinics may offer a quick in-office demo of hearing aids, the real test will be how they perform in your daily life.

Most patients begin their trial period by wearing their hearing aids just a few hours a day while they get used to the sounds. Within a few weeks, patients are encouraged to gradually increase their usage to 8 to 12 hours per day.

The purpose of these trial periods is to allow patients to experience hearing aids before they make their final decision.

They ONLY  
work if you  
wear  
them!

## 6. They require some upkeep — so find a place you like/trust

Throughout the life of a hearing aid (approx. 3-5 years) several visits to your hearing healthcare provider are recommended. An annual hearing evaluation is done to track any changes in your hearing and most hearing aids can simply be reprogrammed to compensate for this.

Ongoing service and cleaning appointments ensure you are getting the best possible sound out of your hearing aid.

They USUALLY  
come in  
PAIRS

## 8. The sooner you get them...the better!!

The longer a patient waits to treat their hearing loss, the more difficult it becomes. Even a mild hearing loss can be extremely disruptive and restrict a patient's communication.

As soon as any hearing loss begins, sounds are not being processed in a normal way. As a result, you begin to hear in a different way and you begin forgetting how the world is supposed to sound.

They can  
be invisible

&  
They will  
CHANGE  
your LIFE!

TRACY SAUNDERS, M.CL.SC.  
AUDIOLOGIST REG. CASLPO  
HEARING SOLUTIONS  
editorial@mediaplanet.com




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## Hearing Solutions




## INSPIRATION

# Helping parents help their children

### QUESTION AND ANSWER


**Kathy Ireland — supermodel-turned-business woman and mother of three — knows the importance of communicating with her children in regards to their hearing health. It's something she doesn't take for granted and is thankful for the gift of communication everyday.**

**What led you to become so passionate about hearing health?**

 So much communication and education is based on what we hear. Conserving our hearing


health gives us a great opportunity to learn and grow. So many of us take our hearing for granted. Loud music is just one example. I have so many loved ones, who damaged their hearing and lived to regret it. There is no question that we can live full wonderful lives without hearing. It is an extraordinary benefit to be able to enjoy the sounds of life.

**As a parent, how important is it to openly communicate with family and finding different ways to communicate daily?**


 It is critical for parents to communicate openly with family. The truth is, we are always

communicating, whether verbal, non-verbal, with body language... we're constantly sending signals of communication to other people, especially to children. We must be sure that the messages that we are sending, are the ones we want received. Communication is an art form that we work at daily and never fully master. Despite our best efforts, we're frequently misunderstood. I try every day to make my communication clearer and kinder.

**Do you have any advice for parents when dealing with communicating openly to their children?**

 Don't be afraid to tackle the tough stuff, when dealing with your kids. My advice? Get over being uncomfortable and start talking. Too many young people tell me that they've never had essential, personal conversations about life with their parents. As Moms and Dads, our comfort is irrelevant. Our kids need the truth and it is our responsibility to give it to them ...regularly.

**Have you ever been in a situation where you were affected by hearing health/communication barriers?**

 I don't experience hearing issues as barriers. I feel they are opportunities for new ways of connecting. A note can say so much... a hug speaks volumes. When we find the connection between people who learn differently we are blessed. We are taught by people who face hearing loss. The most important lesson? Open your heart to everyone and you will hear and learn from each person you encounter. Everyone has a beautiful story; make sure that you experience it. Millions of people are blessed by those who battle hearing loss. Allow yourself to receive their blessing.

**MAKING A DIFFERENCE**  
Kathy Ireland encourages parents to communicate to their children about their health.  
PHOTO: KATHY IRELAND WORLDWIDE

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CANADA

ELLIE CHOE

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## INSIGHT

# Protecting your ears while enjoying music

FACT

3

MANY MODERN  
HEARING AIDS  
CAN BE HIDDEN  
BEHIND THE EAR  
AND ARE VERY  
DIFFICULT TO SEE

In some bizarre way, it would be interesting if blood gushed out of your ears whenever one's hearing was damaged. Thank goodness this does not happen but it would sure make something that is invisible, much easier to notice.

Hearing loss from noise sources such as music occurs over many years and there is no pain (or blood) associated with this progression. Many people have called hearing loss, the "invisible handicap". It occurs slowly, and in most cases, other people may notice it long before you do. Who would have

thought that Mozart could be damaging to one's hearing?

## Prolonging exposures

Hearing loss from music occurs when there is prolonged exposure to sound level over 85 decibels. This may seem loud but 85 decibels is about the level of a dial tone on the phone or the sound of a toilet flushing (with your head in the toilet

bowl). It's actually quite amazing how quiet a damaging level of noise or music can be, if you listen to it for a long enough time.

"It's actually quite amazing how quiet a damaging level of noise or music can be, if you listen to it for a long enough time."

Thankfully there are many things that can be done. Moderation is the first line of defense — if you go to a rock concert on Friday night, don't mow your lawn on Saturday — give your ears 16-18 hours of rest. Better yet, get someone else to mow it for you!

## Hearing protection

There are now a range of ear plugs that are designed with music in mind. These specially designed hearing protectors allow the musician and the listener to still hear their music, but at a less damaging level. Music still sounds like music, but the overall volume is slightly reduced.

Also, don't forget to sing along. It turns out that all mammals (including us) have a small muscle in our middle ears (behind the eardrum) that contracts upon loud sounds such as our own voice or the sound

of Mozart and The Tragically Hip. It turns out that if you hum or sing along, this (stapedius) muscle contracts and automatically turns down the volume of the music slightly.

Go ahead and listen to your music, and even turn up the volume for your favorite song — just turn it back down to a more moderate level after. And don't forget to take a break and watch someone else mow your lawn for you.

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? Q & A WITH JILLIAN PRICE,  
CHIEF AUDIOLOGIST AT LISTENUP! CANADA

## Investing in your hearing health

**1 How imperative is it to invest in a hearing aid? What are the benefits of investing in your hearing health (minus initial financial costs)?**

Age related hearing loss tends to happen very gradually over time. Because it is a gradual decline often people will wait on average between 5-7 years before treating the loss. Untreated hearing loss is associated with anxiety, depression, isolation, frustration, withdrawal and negatively affects overall quality of life.

**2 What are some tips you can give the readers to being proactive about their hearing health?**

Of course, the first tip I would give is to tell readers to visit your local hearing health-care provider and arrange to have your hearing checked.

Secondly, I would encourage readers to be proactive in protecting their hearing from noise pollution.

Thirdly, I would strongly encourage people to seek treatment right away if a hearing loss has been identified.

**3 What are some tips you can give the readers when looking to purchase a hearing aid?**

Firstly, seek the professional advice of a qualified hearing professional. Secondly, I would advise readers to inquire about warranties and services that are included in the purchase of your hearing aid. Thirdly, involve your family member(s) in this experience and bring them along to your appointment.

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NEWS

# Save the hearing for the music

**“What sound would you miss the most if you couldn’t hear it anymore?” a facilitator asks Grade 4 students receiving a Sound Sense hearing loss presentation.**

“Music!” they yell. And they are right, because people with acquired hearing loss often mourn for the ability to enjoy music as they once did.

## Different types of hearing loss

Regardless of cause or severity, hearing loss affects our ability to understand and enjoy music. People with hearing loss often have difficulty understanding lyrics or identifying different instruments. If someone has known the joy of music, losing it can be emotionally painful and life-changing.

Noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL) is permanent. Overexposure to loud noise, usually over time, can cause irreversible damage to the delicate hearing system and today, NIHL is the fastest grow-

**SOUNDS OF LIFE**  
By paying attention to the volume on portable music devices, you can prevent NIHL.



ing type of hearing loss, especially among youth who are exposed to loud noise at home, in the classroom and with leisure activities such as video games and MP3 players which allow them to bring music directly into their ears. And the type of music is irrelevant; if the sound is over 80 decibels, classical, rock or religious music are equally and potentially dangerous.

The good news is that NIHL is almost 100 percent preventable. By

adopting safe listening strategies, our children can keep on enjoying the sounds of life.

## Programs available

Sound Sense is The Hearing Foundation of Canada’s award-winning program that helps students discover how they can protect their hearing — by turning ‘it’ down, reducing listening time, standing back from the noise, and wearing hearing protection in noisy situations.

At the end of the Sound Sense presentation, the facilitator asks the students that if they would rather wear hearing aids in the future or earplugs now.

“Earplugs!” they shout.

Good choice, kids. Hearing is precious and worth saving.

**SOURCE: THE HEARING FOUNDATION OF CANADA**  
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# YOU MIGHT HAVE HEARING LOSS IF...

## HOW I MADE IT

Hearing loss changes lives. Without hearing loss, I would have married a completely different man — at least I think so, but maybe I didn’t hear him correctly.

At the time, I wasn’t always open or confident about my hearing loss, so the relationship fizzled. Things are different now — I eventually married the right guy and although hearing loss does have an impact on every area of my life, I know how to express my communication needs and have them met.

But millions of people are strug-

gling with what, for many, has been a years-long internal battle: *Do I have hearing loss? I think I do...I probably don’t...but I’m sure I do...nah, I’m not old enough...*

I don’t want to be a fanatic, walking around yelling to anyone who will listen: *“I have hearing loss, you have hearing loss, we ALL have hearing loss! Admit it now and be saved!”* However, recent studies show that a huge chunk of the population does have hearing loss, yet many are slow to admit it — and slower still to do something about it.

How does a person know for sure if they have hearing loss? If any

of the following situations seems familiar, perhaps it’s time to visit a hearing care professional.

## Symptoms to keep in mind

- Your family and friends and doctor say you do.
- Your TV volume drives others from the room.
- ‘Pardon’ is your favorite word.
- You can’t understand your dentist when his lips move behind a mask. Hint: You read lips, a lot.
- People are waving at you more these days. Hint: they’re not being friendly, just trying to get your attention.

■ Young children sound like gerbils. Old people sound like old gerbils.

■ Romantic ambiance ain’t what it used to be. Other diners have one candle on their table, you need 10 on yours.

If any of these sound familiar, it’s time to get some hearing help and be saved. Why miss out on such an important part of life? Hearing technology — and a positive attitude — can help restore the sounds you love.

**GAEL HANNAN**  
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## ! LOOKING DEEPER

## The impact of hearing loss on life

Always thought of as an “elderly person’s problem,” hearing loss is, in fact, occurring at much earlier stages of life than ever before. Increasing noise levels of modern day life and the pervasive use of phones and music players are now causing the occurrence of hearing loss in people in their twenties, for the first time in recorded history.

A little-known fact about hearing loss is that if left untreated, it causes auditory functions of the brain to atrophy, which over a prolonged period, results in the loss of “sound vocabulary” in the brain. That is, the brain eventually forgets the association of the sound with the source. For example, when we don’t hear the high pitched chirping of birds because we have hearing loss in the high frequencies, we will eventually forget that sound.

## Early identification

The effects of the early stages of hearing loss are seen (or heard!) in the increasingly louder volume settings of television, difficulty following conversations in noisy social environments like restaurants, difficulty talking over the phone, and enjoying music.

While hearing aids offer the most profound solution for overcoming hearing difficulties, they are not always the answer. Assistive listening devices, which can be purchased at a fraction of the cost, are worth considering. They offer a great solution for these hard to hear listening situations, and may just help to preserve the brain’s “sound vocabulary” that much longer.

**GORA GANGULI**  
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## INSIGHT



## CHECK THIS OUT

**Being dedicated to managing your hearing loss**

**For a person who's been fitted with a hearing aid, having the confidence and awareness to raise any issues that they're having with their device is imperative.**

"The long-term relationship between the hearing aid and the individual is truly the most important relationship one can have," said Irena Gryffer, Hearing Instrument Specialist at M.G. Hearing Systems Inc. "You need to have confidence in the device that you're working with."

By maintaining a strong line of communication with their clinician and having regular assessments, a patient can ensure that, as their situation changes, they're being supplied with a product that fits their requirements.

**Long term relationship**

"It's important to continue communicating with your clinician, because as they find out about new technologies, they can make changes and offer better advice," said Gryffer. "You must be able to deal with the clinician that has the ability to interact personally with you; to listen to what your specific needs are."

Gryffer believes that it's essential for patients to seek a second opinion if they feel that their device is not functioning to their specific needs. "If you're not getting the satisfaction that you anticipated from your device get a good professional to have a look at what you've got. It doesn't matter if you've had it for one year or five," she said.

JOE ROSENGARTEN

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# SUDDEN HEARING LOSS

**Hearing loss doesn't always occur over time — sometimes it just happens.**

**Read Don's story with sudden hearing loss and the steps he took to conquer his scare.**

**Don vividly recalls his experience with sudden hearing loss, even though it occurred several years ago.**

"It happened on a Sunday afternoon...I remember feeling odd while out for a walk...things just didn't seem right... and in conversation people seemed quite distant. [When] the phone rang, I answered it, put the receiver up to my right ear — and realized I couldn't hear anything at all on that side!"

As an emergency physician himself, Don recognized that his symptoms required immediate medical attention.

**Early treatment**

While a large percentage of sudden hearing loss cases turn out to be due to simple causes such as wax blockage or ear infections, any one-sided decrease in hearing should not be ignored, as it could be due to an inner ear or sensorineural problem.

Sudden sensorineural hearing loss (SSNHL) affects 5 to 20 per 100,000 persons. For anyone affected, the sooner the treatment begins, the better the chance of hearing improvement. If untreated, spontaneous recovery only occurs in about 25 percent of cases; early diagnosis and treatment improves the recovery to 50 percent.



**Erica Wong**  
Senior Audiologist,  
Mount Sinai Hospital



**Nadia Sandor**  
Senior Audiologist,  
Mount Sinai Hospital

**Looking upwards**

Fortunately for Don, his hearing was restored after prompt attention. "To my delight and amazement...my hearing seemed much improved. By the next day when I had testing, my hearing was normal".

Sudden hearing loss is defined as a decrease of 30 decibels or more in hearing, in at least three consecutive frequencies occurring within a 72 hour period. Accurate hearing testing is very helpful in the diagnosis of SSNHL and serial testing can measure any changes over time.

Joyce also experienced a sudden decrease in her hearing ability. "I was extremely frightened...and isolated by the virtually complete

hearing loss in the right ear". She sought medical help right away; however there was very little improvement in her hearing after treatment.

Joyce now benefits greatly from wireless technology that transmits sound from her poorer ear to her better ear.

"My family doctor recognized the seriousness and arranged an immediate consult...Thanks to the ear specialist and audiologist, I have been blessed with many extra years of highly functioning personal and professional life."

ERICA WONG AND NADIA SANDOR  
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