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Better hearing. Doesn't that sound good?

# HEAR & NOW

## Patriot Center for Hearing Loss Newsletter

### BELLS & WHISTLES

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### FUN FACTOIDS

- ☀ The smallest bones in the body are in your ear and are full size at birth!
- ☀ The whole area of the middle ear is no larger than an M&M and the cochlea (inner ear) is about the size of a pencil eraser!
- ☀ Sound travels at the speed of 1130 feet per second, or 770 miles per hour!
- ☀ A sonic boom occurs when an object breaks the speed of sound. The sound waves from behind and in front of the object crash into each other and create the boom!
- ☀ In Africa, a tribe of people call Maabans live in such quiet that they can hear a whisper from across a baseball field, even when they are very old!
- ☀ Sitting in front of the speakers at a rock concert can expose a person to 120 dB, which will begin to damage hearing in only 7-1/2 minutes!
- ☀ It does not matter if you like the sounds you are exposed to. An orchestra playing Mozart at 120 dB will damage your hearing as quickly as Metallica playing at 120 dB!

#### *Ringin in the ear*

Tinnitus is often referred to as ringing in the ears, although some people hear hissing, roaring, whistling, chirping or clicking. It can be constant, come and go, in one ear or both ears. Tinnitus is defined as the perception of sound when no external sound is present. The sounds you hear are not your imagination. Tinnitus is very real and very common. Over 50 million Americans reportedly experience tinnitus to some degree. It can originate in the middle ear, caused by twitching of muscles or blood flow, or it can come from the inner ear, due to hair cell abnormalities. Tinnitus is a symptom and has many underlying causes. The exact cause is often unknown but noise exposure and the aging process are probably the most common. Certain medications can also cause or worsen tinnitus. Finding the cause, when possible, is the best way to eliminate or decrease tinnitus. When the cause is unknown, there are various treatment options to try, including diet modifications, biofeedback, masking, etc. Hearing loss often accompanies tinnitus. When that is the case, the use of hearing aids can help by amplifying sounds around you, thereby taking away from the internal sounds you are hearing, and also by reducing the stress caused by straining to listen.

#### *Tinnitus and the foods we eat*

Some people have found that certain foods or ingredients either dim or exaggerate their tinnitus. There have been no hard and fast rules regarding this since the same food can affect people quite differently. A trial and error approach in which specific foods are eliminated from the diet for a week or more, then reintroduced one at a time, may be helpful in determining what effect food has on your tinnitus. Note if the tinnitus is relieved when specific foods are eliminated and find out if a negative reaction occurs when the food is eaten again. You should do this with the guidance of your physician. If you suspect that a particular food is a culprit, test it more than once before you take it out of your diet as tinnitus can fluctuate for various reasons or no reason at all. (source: Tinnitus Today, June 2006, by Barbara Tabachnick Sanders, ATA Associate Director) Known triggers for some people, though not scientifically proven, include caffeine, sugar, artificial sweeteners and salt. You may want to eliminate caffeine (found in coffee, tea, sodas and chocolate) slowly to avoid withdrawal headaches. If you find your tinnitus is less severe, let us know so we can share your success with others.

For more information on tinnitus, call us at 865-471-0466. You can also contact the American Tinnitus Association at (800) 634-8978 or [www.ata.org](http://www.ata.org).

# Ear Candling

We often have been asked about ear candling so I thought it would be a good idea to share what I have learned. Lisa M.L. Dryer, M.D, who practices emergency medicine in New York City, explains why “Ear Candling Is Not A Good Idea” at <http://www.quackwatch.org/01QuackeryRelatedTopics/candling.html>. Much of the following was found in that article.

## Procedures

Ear candling, or coning, refers to various procedures that involve placing a collecting plate above the ear and inserting a candle through a hole in the plate into the ear canal. The candle is then lit. When the candle burns down to about 2 inches in length, it is extinguished in a bowl of water. The debris that comes out of the candle is reported to be earwax, toxins, dead skin, etc.

## Testing By Skeptics

Several investigations have been done to determine if the ear candling claims of removing earwax are true. By comparing the debris inside the candle after a typical ear candling session with the debris found inside the candle following the same procedure but using a test tube instead of an ear canal, the exact same material was identified. Further testing of this material proved it to originate from the candle itself and was *not* ear wax.

## Why Candling Is A Bad Idea

- The negative pressure needed to pull wax from the canal would have to be so powerful that it would rupture the eardrum in the process; however, candling produces *no* vacuum.
- Candling poses several dangers, the most serious of which involve burning caused by the hot wax.
- Candles marketed with health claims are classified by the FDA as medical devices and are illegal to market without FDA approval, which none of them have.
- Not only is ear candling dangerous, it may not even be necessary. Many people who have had ear candling done report that no observation of their ear canal was done to see if they even had excessive ear wax, nor was the canal checked after the ear wax was supposedly removed to see if the canal was clear. If ear wax does not move out of the ear canal naturally and becomes blocked in the ear, it should be removed by a physician or other health professional using legitimate instruments.



## Oto's Hearing Aid Battery Tips:

- Most hearing aids now have alerting tones to let you know when your battery needs to be replaced. You should also suspect it is time to change your batteries if your hearing aids begin to sound weak or stop working completely. A battery tester is a good idea.
- The life expectancy for batteries depends upon several factors but the *average* is 14 days for size 13 (color coded orange), 10 days for size 312 (brown) and 7 days for size 10 (yellow). *We offer complimentary batteries with most of our hearing aid purchases or you can be a part of our Battery Club program and get every 5<sup>th</sup> pack free. We are currently offering 8-pack batteries for the same price as the 4-pack!*
- Be sure to turn the hearing aid off when not in use. Opening the battery door is recommended. Some hearing aids use this as the on/off switch so the hearing aids are not actually “off” unless the door is open.
- Do not carry loose batteries as they can “short out” if they touch coins, keys, or even other batteries.
- Sometimes the battery may just need cleaning. Try rubbing both sides with a pencil eraser.
- Store batteries in a cool, dry place but do not store batteries in the refrigerator as this draws moisture, which can then harm your hearing aid.
- If using the Dry & Store Hearing Aid Conditioning System, leave the battery in. Research has shown the dehumidifier can actually increase battery life. Most hearing aid drying systems require that you remove the battery so if you are using a different kind, check their instructions.
- Do not remove the tab on the battery until ready to use. Once removed, the battery is “activated” and will begin to drain slowly, even if not in use.
- Do not store your hearing aids for extended periods of time with the battery in.
- REMEMBER- batteries are poisonous. Store away from small children and pets and do not allow them to get mixed in with your medications. Seek immediate medical attention if swallowed.