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Better hearing. Doesn't that sound good?

HEAR & NOW

Patriot Center for Hearing Loss Newsletter



With A Little Help From Our Friends

Glory be to God for our first 5 wonderful years! We celebrated this special anniversary last September with an open house get-together. Everyone was welcome with an announcement placed in the local newspaper. We were very pleased at the turn-out. It was so nice to see our patients and friends come through the door, showing us their support and helping us celebrate a milestone. It was especially nice to overhear our current hearing aid wearers giving encouragement to guests who had questions about hearing aids. We also appreciate those who were unable to attend but sent warm wishes and happy thoughts our way. Thanks everyone!



Better hearing. Now doesn't that sound good?

Been putting off doing something about your hearing loss? Statistics show most people experiencing difficulty hearing wait about seven years before finally doing something about it...seven years of struggling, missing out on precious moments and opportunities, frustrating family and friends and becoming isolated and depressed. When they finally do something about it, they wonder why they waited so long! Why do they wait? Often it is denial. "Everyone mumbles" or "I hear what I want to hear" or "I know I can't hear good but there is nothing that can be done about it." The problem with denial is it leads to deprivation. Stop depriving yourself and start hearing better! You will discover you really haven't been hearing what you want or need to hear. Better hearing is a relief, not a burden. It means less tension, less frustration, less avoiding doing the things you enjoyed doing. Better hearing puts a spring in your step! Thankfully, for the vast majority of people, something *can* be done about hearing loss. Hearing aids help people with nerve type hearing loss, conductive hearing loss, high frequency hearing loss, mild losses, severe losses, even people with tinnitus (ringing in the ears). And hearing aids are now smaller, more discreet and easier to wear. Don't take our word for it though. Give them a try for yourself, risk-free for one whole month, money-back guaranteed!



ATTENTION TINNITUS SUFFERERS

Do you hear a ringing, buzzing or chirping sound in the ears? You are not alone. Tinnitus is a symptom that afflicts approximately 50 million Americans. If you are like most tinnitus sufferers, you also experience hearing loss. Finally, a new tool is available to help! We are happy to introduce a new hearing aid that uses a patented, unique program to provide relaxation and tinnitus management, unlike anything else in a hearing instrument. Call today to learn more about this exciting, innovative new technology!

★ ★ ★ Customer Loyalty Savings ★ ★ ★

If you purchased hearing aids from us in the past and are ready for new ones, you will receive a **10% savings** off our regular prices in appreciation for your continued loyalty and support. Our special to you for you being so special to us!

note: If we recommended *two* hearing aids and you only purchased one, the discount will not apply to getting the 2nd aid (as it would be unprofessional to encourage getting one aid at a time if indeed two are needed); but if only one ear was aidable and you are purchasing a new aid for the same ear, you will receive the 10% discount.

This is a great article told from the perspective of someone with hearing loss who recently obtained hearing aids. Grace Lim is a teacher of journalism at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh and has previously worked for People Magazine and the Miami Herald. The article is reprinted from the New York Times Health Section, December 2008.

When the Whole World Mumbles

Two months after my 44th birthday, I embarked on a series of routine medical checkups that included a hearing test. I told the audiologist how mumblers appeared to have taken over the world: my yoga teacher, my husband, the college students who take my journalism classes. They all mumbled.

She listened, nodded, compassion in her eyes, and said, "It's not them." Three tiny words, followed by two even more devastating ones. "It's you."

That was the day I learned that I had a moderate to severe hearing loss. It should have been obvious to me all these years, but somehow I didn't notice. I watch TV with subtitles and the volume cranked up. My sons, ages 12 and 9, often say "Never mind" because I have so often asked them to repeat themselves. And for years, I've accused my husband of sneaking up on me. "I *live* here," he says with exasperation, but has nonetheless learned to announce himself every time he enters a room so he doesn't startle me. In the large auditorium where I teach one of my classes, I constantly stop my students midsentence so I can run up and down the aisles to get within hearing distance.

My hearing loss appears to be genetic. My mother and grandmother both have hearing loss, but I had always thought it was due to normal aging. But my level of hearing loss at a relatively young age suggests hearing problems run in my family. After my hearing tests, the audiologist told me that the decibel level at which I am comfortable hearing is twice that of a normal person. When she demonstrated the normal decibel level, I was shocked. It was as if I had been placed into a Charlie Brown TV world where grown-ups spoke in an unintelligible muffled language.

"This is how people without hearing impairment talk to each other," she said. Then she turned it back to the higher level. "This is how you need them to talk to you," she explained. Whoa. All these years of thinking that I'm surrounded by mumblers? It wasn't them. It's me.

She fitted me with a tiny pair of triangle-shaped hearing aids. She gently maneuvered the receiver, a small malleable dome with a thin plastic wire, into my ear.

"How do they feel?" she asked

"It feels as if I have something stuck in my ears," I told her. She nodded. "It's because you have something stuck in your ears."

I left the office, but returned in minutes from the medical center lobby. "There must be something wrong," I told her. I was hearing rumbly noises and a *whoosh whoosh* sound, along with a ton of chatter. She sent me away, explaining that I was hearing the heater, the electric door and humanity. As it turns out, the world is a noisy place. The world squeaks. My computer chair squeaks. My closet door squeaks. My husband's hand coffee grinder squeaks. I can hear flying leaves rustle by me in the wind.

Standing at the lectern, I now can hear the students in the back row of my class. No more running the stairs. I can watch television without subtitles. And I'm only just beginning to realize the hardship my hearing problems – and my denial of them — have had on my family. It's clear now how often my conversations with my husband ended with him saying, "It doesn't matter," because he didn't feel like repeating himself yet again. Now I can hear my sons' stories the first time they tell them. The other day, my older son whispered to his brother. When I repeated what he said, his eyes widened. My younger son exclaimed, "I want some!" He thinks my hearing aids would make great spy tools.

Some of what I'm hearing surprises me. My sons and their friends are surprisingly loud, especially when happy. Recently I had four 8- and 9-year-old boys over for a play date. I complained to a friend about the incessant noise and thumping sounds. "They're kids," she said. "They thump. That's what they do. You just didn't hear it before."

One of the biggest surprises is the sound that emanates from me. For years, perhaps as a result of watching too many kung-fu movies as a kid, I have had a sense of myself as a ninja-like creature, someone who glides into a room. The first day I had my hearing aids, I was startled by an odd series of sounds that seemed to follow me: *step, scrape, step, scrape*. It would stop as soon as I stopped moving. Confused, I looked around, only to realize that the sound was me, stalking myself. I had no idea that I tend to drag my right heel when I walk. *Step, scrape, step, scrape*.

While my inner ninja is gone, I have discovered that I really am the Bionic Woman. Sometimes, when my students are murmuring in the back of the class, I brush my hair back, cock my head and listen.

Perhaps it's because my hearing loss is genetic and not age-related, but I am not at all embarrassed about my new bionic ears. Now, whether it's a close friend, a casual acquaintance or a co-worker, I greet them the same way. "Look, I have hearing aids!" I exclaim while pulling my hair back to show them.

At first people seem embarrassed by my candor. But once I get them talking, they share their own stories of parents, friends and spouses who remain

in denial about their hearing loss. I told a co-worker that I had no idea how loudly I perform routine tasks like closing the car door or putting down my book bag.

She nodded. "My husband does that," she said.

"He's always slamming the door or slamming the grocery bags down, and I'm thinking, 'Great, what now? What is he mad about?' I'm now wondering if it's just because he can't hear how loud he is."

At my department's holiday party, I sat between two longtime professors. "Look, I have hearing aids!" I greeted them. Then I told them how tough it had been to hear my students. One of them nodded.

"I can't hear my students," she said. "They all mumble."

Sales, Discounts and Coupons (Oh my!)

Some of you have asked us about insurance discount plans or hearing aid coupons seen in ads by other hearing aid places. It is important to understand these discounts are based on MSRP (manufacturer's suggested retail price). We want to assure you that when you purchase hearing aids through us, you are getting prices that are well below MSRP. Some are more than 50% below. We choose to not advertise with coupons and discounts off MSRP because we do our best to price our hearing aids at a fair and reasonable level *every day to every patient*, based on our cost, not on inflated and unrealistic MSRP listings.

No coupons needed!

By the way, if you have hearing aid coverage through your health insurance, check with us. We are in network with most plans though your insurance company may route you to a franchise. If we are not in network, we may be able to match prices.



BUILDING BLOCKS

Many of you own and/or run businesses. I thought it would be nice to work together to build our businesses, which will build our community, and build our economy and foundation. All you need to do is send me the name of your business, where it is located, contact information and a brief description of what the business does. Be sure to include your website if you have one. I will develop a listing in our next newsletter and send you extra copies to hand out to your customers. It becomes the "you tell two friends, then they tell two friends, then they tell two friends...and so on" (except it will be more than two!). Our newsletters are also posted on our website so there is an opportunity for even more people to see your information. Together, we are the building blocks for a stronger community. You can send me your information by email to trstepp@bellsouth.net. If you do not have email, drop it to me in the mail at P.O. Box 297, Jefferson City, TN, 37760. I look forward to hearing from you!

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If this does not apply to you,
before you toss it, consider passing it on.

IF YOU KNOW SOMEONE WITH HEARING LOSS, PASS THIS ALONG. You might just help them take that first step towards better hearing.

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ON THE HOMEFRONT

My nephew (Denise's son), Joey, was only 3 when we opened-- cute as a bug and our model for several ads. I couldn't resist showing him off! Time flies. He turned 9 this past January 11 and is still a cutie. He is a whirlwind of energy—funny, smart, and sweet... but maybe I am a little biased ☺.



Happy Birthday Joey! We love you!

I am once again so humbled by God's blessings. He brought my darling husband through heart surgery last summer; strengthened family bonds and faith through my (soon to be) brother-in-law's medical emergency; and is giving peace to my step-mother-in-law as she faces a serious health challenge. Please continue to remember them as you pray.

We said good-bye to a dear, dear, friend last year. William Purdue was one of the kindest, most humble people I have ever known. He always had a smile and a sweet hug at the ready no matter how badly he must have felt. If his faith ever wavered, it never showed. He is greatly missed but our loss is Heaven's gain. Mr. Purdue never knew my dad but I like to think they met in Heaven, shared a smile, a few stories, and maybe even enjoyed his favorite Clark bar!