

The Southside Scene

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In the Livingston Health
Services Building

Welcome to our newsletter! We hope you will find the information it contains to be helpful, and encourage you to pass it along to friends or family members who might also benefit from it. Please feel free to suggest topics for further newsletters – call us or let us know at your next visit!

Hearing Aid Maintenance: An Integral Part of Hearing Aid Success

The upkeep of hearing aids is essential to their longevity and function, and your hearing benefit. Keeping the hearing aid free of wax, debris, and moisture will keep the hearing aid/earmold from going in for repair (or at least less frequently).

Here are some pointers to keep your hearing aid up and running:

1. Each night clean the canal portion of your hearing aid or earmold. This is the portion that inserts into your ear. Use your cleaning tool with the looped pick at one end to help you with this job. Please do not use tools not meant for this job such as paperclips or toothpicks. Damage is inevitable with other tools.
2. Wipe your hearing aid clean with a clean, dry cloth. You may use a wet cloth for earmolds.
3. Using a soft bristled toothbrush, brush the face of the hearing aid, especially around the microphones, to keep debris from getting down into the microphone ports. You can use the same brush to clean the battery door and around the battery compartment.
4. With an earmold, you may need to remove the earmold from the hearing aid and blow out any moisture droplets using your tubing blower.
5. Earmold tubing needs to stay soft and pliable to efficiently deliver the sound from the hearing aid into your ear. Periodic tubing changes at the office are typically necessary.
6. Some hearing aids have wax screens or other tools to prevent wax from getting into the receiver. Change these screens periodically to ensure maximum volume from your hearing aid.
7. As we get into the warmer, more humid months, moisture can be a culprit. You may need to use a Dri-Aid regularly. A sure sign of moisture is if the hearing aid seems to fade throughout the day.
8. Have your hearing aid regularly cleaned by Sue at the office. She can clean deeper into the hearing aid. Every 6 months is a reasonable timeframe.
9. Keep your hearing aid free of chemicals such as hairspray, hair gels, lotions, etc.



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The Scoop on Sue

Sue will be attending several training sessions in an effort to provide you with the most up-to-date services available! Please note the following dates that she will be out of the office:

- 3/12
- 3/19
- 3/31-4/2
- 4/23-4/30

Please note that, although we will not be seeing patients on these dates, we will have someone available to answer the phone and make appointments for you, at least on a part-time basis during those dates.

Call for an appointment if you have performed all of the above and the hearing aid still does not seem to work properly. This may be when your warranty comes in handy! ■



Sue Says...

Take the Quiz What Do You Know About Audiology and Hearing Aids?

True or False: *I have been told that I have “Nerve” hearing loss and that a hearing aid could not help me.*

Answer: False. Unfortunately, the term “Nerve” hearing loss is often used inappropriately. A true nerve hearing loss traditionally could not be helped with a hearing aid. The good news is two-fold. First, most hearing losses are NOT nerve hearing losses. They are more sensory or “cochlear.” This refers to the inner ear, the organ that does the actual hearing. We use the term “sensorineural” to describe this type of hearing loss. This is the type of hearing loss for which most people DO wear hearing aids. Secondly, recent studies and efforts have shown that people who do have true “Nerve” hearing loss are benefiting from the latest technologies in hearing aids. Limitations may be greater overall for this type of hearing loss, but people are successfully wearing hearing aids for true nerve loss. A true nerve loss typically occurs for people who have or have had a tumor on the hearing nerve, or other neurological disorder (such as Neurofibromatosis or multiple sclerosis).

True or False: *We can put a man on the moon, but we can’t make the perfect hearing aid.*

Answer: True. It is true that we have put a man on the moon, and we anticipate to do so again. It is also true that we cannot make a perfect hearing aid. The truth about hearing aids is that they are only as good as the system they are supporting. In other words, the system is only as good as its weakest part, that being the ear itself. The human body is such a well-designed machine that we have not been able to mimic it with electronic machinery. This is frustrating and sometimes unacceptable to some. The hearing industry continues to pursue the perfect hearing aid. Fair warning...even the perfect hearing aid cannot overcome the psychology of hearing loss.

A quick note about the psychology of hearing loss...hearing loss is a multi-faceted phenomenon. It is a medical condition that cannot be fixed (for most). It is a social condition that causes communication frustrations and embarrassments. Communication is the essence of our being. It is also a psychological condition that can cause depression, paranoia and withdrawal. Hearing aids must be fit to all of these conditions in a balanced manner.

True or False: *Children’s hearing cannot be tested until age 2 or older.*

Answer: False. In New York State, and many other states, mandatory newborn hearing screening exists. This means that for newborns (well-baby or special care nursery), the state requires the baby’s hearing to be tested. Bottom line...we can test anybody’s hearing at any age. In fact, the sooner any hearing loss is identified, the greater the chances of the child developing speech and language, surviving academically, behaviorally and socially, and ultimately living a productive life and contributing to society. The total cost to society in the long run is far less than waiting for hearing losses to be identified. Different techniques are used for different age levels. For many children, the hearing losses are variable, fluctuating, and temporary; but still important to identify.

Currently at Southside Hearing Center, we have the capacity to test 10 month olds and older. This is solely for the lack of equipment, not abilities. We hope to have the equipment in the near future so that we can service all ages within our community!

True or False: *People are finding that their health insurance is starting to pay for hearing aids.*

Answer: True. Some health insurances are starting to provide financial help toward the purchase of a hearing aid. Few will cover the total cost, but when it comes to hearing aids, any little bit helps. Some of the insurances that have hearing aid coverage include Preferred Care Gold and Gold Value. You must have the rider as part of your plan. The benefit is \$600.00 every 3 years. The \$600.00 can be used toward new hearing aids, or even repairs. Empire Insurance offers \$1200.00 every 4 years. Blue Cross and Blue Shield –Blue Million Plan may include a rider for hearing aids. You would receive \$700.00 per hearing aid, twice per lifetime. Various other insurances may offer some financial support for hearing aids with specific riders. Still others, i.e. some General Motors Plans, may provide for one conventional hearing aid every three or four years. Certainly the ones that offer a dollar amount rather than limitations to products are better so that you and the audiologist can choose which products are best for your hearing. Medicare still DOES NOT help with hearing aids. They will pay for a diagnostic hearing evaluation only. Check with your health insurance provider to see if you have the benefit! ■

Technology Update—More Assistive Listening Devices!

By Mary Beth Barber-Mothersell

The telephone is so much a part of our every day lives that we take it for granted. Most of us cannot imagine our world without a telephone. Cell phones have become so commonplace that *not* having one is more unusual than having one! If you or someone you care about is having difficulty hearing on the telephone, read on!

What happens when you notice that you can't quite understand people on the phone anymore? When people "don't speak clearly," they "mumble," they "talk too fast!" If this is happening to you, and you have stopped using the telephone, then it may be time to try the New York Relay Service (NYRS).

People don't often think of the New York Relay Service as being an Assistive Listening Device. It is! The New York Relay Service helps people who use a text telephone (TTY) or Voice Carryover (VCO) telephone to communicate with others who use a standard voice telephone. A TTY is a teletypewriter, also known as a Text Telephone. Voice Carryover is an option for deaf or hard of hearing people who prefer to speak rather than type. To use Voice Carryover (VCO) you need either a special VCO telephone or a regular telephone with a TTY. More information on these devices is available at New York Relay Customer Service- 1-800-676-3777. (Voice or TTY)

Southside Hearing Center would like to extend our gratitude to Mary Beth Barber-Mothersell for sharing her expertise in this article.

To make a relay call, the TTY or VCO customer connects to a relay operator by dialing the appropriate relay number. The customer types or speaks a message to the operator, who then orally "relays" that message to the voice customer. When the hearing person responds, the relay operator types their message to the text display on the TTY or VCO telephone. When each person is finished with a message, type or say GA for "Go Ahead" so the other person knows it is their turn. At the end of the call, to let the other person know you are finished; you type or say "SK" which means you are ready to hang up. A conversation might look like this:

TTY: "Hi Kate, this is Pat. Would you like to go to Denny's for dinner?
GA"

VOICE: "Hi Pat! Yes, I will meet you at 7:00 p.m. GA"

TTY: "Great! I will be there! Bring your pictures! Bye for now, GA to
SK".

VOICE: "Thanks! I will! See you soon! SKSK".

All calls to the center are confidential. There is no additional charge to use the relay service. FTR rates apply to all local and regional calls and Sprint will handle all Long Distance calls unless you request another company.

For more information on TTYs, VCO telephones or the NYRS, please call Mary Beth Barber-Mothersell at 585-243-4880 (voice) or 800-927-0282 (TTY). Relay outreach and education is available for individuals and businesses. You may also get information from the NYRS website at www.nyrelay.com. Don't wait! Start communicating again!

About the author:

Deaf since birth, Mary Beth Barber-Mothersell has been the New York Relay Account Manager since 1997. Her office is located in Geneseo, New York. Mary Beth is married to Jeff Mothersell and they have two children, Jessica and Trevor. After receiving her Bachelor's degree from the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) at the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT), Mary Beth earned her Master of Social Work degree from Syracuse University. An avid relay customer, Mary Beth uses New York Relay every day for personal and business phone calls. Be sure to contact her if you have any questions about the New York Relay!



VCO Phone



TTY Phone

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Technology Update

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For More Information on New York Relay:

New York Relay Inquiry Line	Voice: (800) 664-6349 TTY: (800) 835-5515
NY Relay Service TTY (for deaf, hard of hearing or speech disabled users w/ a VCO or TTY)	(800) 662-1220
NY Relay Service VOICE (for hearing people without at TTY)	(800) 421-1220
NY Relay Service VCO Direct (for VCO users who don't want to type at all)	(877) 826-6977

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- Now is the time to purchase new hearing aids or replace old hearing aids...call us and ask how you can **save up to \$1000** when you purchase new hearing aids during the month of March! Tell your friends and family, too!
- Tired of going to the store to get hearing aid batteries? **Join our Battery Club**, and we'll mail them to you when you need them! Call us for details.
- Some **Preferred Care Gold** contracts now offer \$600 toward the purchase of new hearing aids or the repair of existing hearing aids, renewing every 3 years.....call Preferred Care to see if you have this benefit available!