

Sound BYTES

INFORMATION FOR YOUR EARS



HEART HEALTH AND HEARING HEALTH



The link between Cardiovascular Health and Hearing Health.

Just as the eyes are the “windows to the soul”, the ears may very well provide a sneak peek at the condition of a person’s heart. While the ears tell nothing of the emotional state of a person, they may indeed help provide early detection for cardiovascular disease.

Research suggests a link between heart health and hearing loss. It’s a fact that the complex inner ear is extremely sensitive to changes in blood flow, and so potential problems with the cardiovascular system may be detected by the ear before other areas of the body. Damaged blood vessels can

compromise blood flow in many parts of the body, but when it comes to the ear, the result can cause permanent hearing loss. Other parts of the body have a “back up” blood supply; whereas the delicate inner ear does not, and this leaves it vulnerable to damage from reduced blood flow.

The test results from a hearing exam may actually prompt a need for cardiovascular assessment. The shape of a person’s hearing loss is the tell-tale sign. A typical hearing loss from aging or hereditary factors usually takes the form of better hearing in the lower frequencies, which slopes to poorer hearing in the higher frequencies. However, a pattern of low frequency hearing loss that rises to better hearing in the higher frequencies may be an indicator to refer for assessment of cardiovascular health.

There are many reasons to keep an eye on hearing as we age, including the link between hearing loss and

dementia, and now the link between heart health provides yet another reason to be proactive. Individuals age 40 and over with these concerns are recommended to have a hearing evaluation as part of their routine medical exam, especially those who have a history of heart disease.

Physical activity is key to many aspects of our health, and the good news is that a person may actually decrease their risk of hearing loss by increasing physical activity. The American Heart Association recommends an active lifestyle, healthy diet, and maintaining healthy blood pressure for good heart health. So, one factor in keeping your hearing strong may truly be as simple as keeping your pulse strong. Talk to your primary care physician today about scheduling a hearing evaluation with Professional Hearing Services.

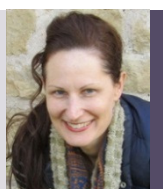
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*Our “Ask the Expert,”
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PROTECTING YOUR HEARING



Noise induced hearing loss (NIHL) can be caused by a one-time exposure to an intense “impulse” sound or by prolonged exposure to high levels of noise. Excessive noise exposure is one of the most common causes of hearing loss. The National Institute of Health (NIH) reports about 15 percent of Americans aged 20 to 69 have hearing loss due to noise exposure related to occupations or recreational activities. Common occupational and leisure activities that can cause NIHL are: truck drivers, construction, factory workers, military, police officers, musicians, video gamers, and hunters.

Fortunately, NIHL is preventable. Ear plugs, ear muffs, and custom hearing protection are all options to help protect your hearing. It is important to understand the intensity of the noise you are exposed to so the proper hearing protection can be selected. Non-custom earplugs are typically made of foam or silicone material. These tend to be disposable or reusable. Custom earplugs typically offer the greatest amount of noise reduction. They are designed specifically for your ear and require an earmold impression by an audiologist. Custom options take about three weeks to be made.

Protecting the ears is important in maintaining your hearing health. Noise permanently affects hearing over time, so there has never been a better time to start wearing hearing protection than now. Call Professional Hearing Services today to discuss your hearing protection options.

ASK THE EXPERT: TINNITUS SOUND MANAGEMENT

QUESTION: WHAT IS TINNITUS?

Ringings, buzzing, roaring, clicking and hissing are all words that can be used to describe tinnitus. Tinnitus is the perception of sound in your ear(s) or head, when no external sound is present. While there is no cure for tinnitus, treatment options such as sound therapy can provide relief.

QUESTION: WHAT IS SOUND THERAPY?

Have you ever noticed that your tinnitus is less noticeable on a busy day, and seems more irritating when in quiet? The more sound you hear externally, the less you notice your internal noises, such as tinnitus. Presenting a sound during these quiet times is an effective way to distract your brain from focusing on the tinnitus. In general, sound therapy means the use of external noise in order to alter the perception of, or reaction to, tinnitus. Like other tinnitus treatments, sound therapies do not cure the condition, but may significantly lower the perceived burden of tinnitus.

QUESTION: ARE THERE SOUND THERAPY OPTIONS THROUGH MY SMARTPHONE?

Yes! There are sound therapy options that can be accomplished by directly sending sound through your smartphone, tablet, or hearing devices if you have the Made for iPhone technology. There are many apps that are available and most are free to download. These apps provide sound therapy to decrease the loudness or annoyance of the tinnitus. The apps allow you to choose from a variety of sounds, adjust the volume, frequency response and rate of fluctuation, providing you with highly-personalized relief sounds for your unique tinnitus. Exercises are available through the apps to help you relax and stay calm. Some of the apps even offer a timer for use when falling asleep.

Some of the tinnitus management apps that are available are: Resound Relief, Starkey Relax, Oticon Tinnitus Sound and Phonak Tinnitus balance. Start your tinnitus relief, by searching your app store today!

