

# ENT Treatment News

☞ Summer 2012 ☞

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## *HELP! Tips for Hearing Better in a Noisy Restaurant*

**BROOKFIELD**—What's the number one complaint I get from people who wear hearing aids? You guessed it—Difficulty understanding speech in background noise! The noise can affect you in two ways. First, it can make it nearly impossible to hear what someone is saying because the noise may be louder than the speech. Also, noise can often distract you and make it hard for you to pay attention to the conversation. Keep in mind that everyone struggles to hear speech in background noise; even normal hearing people can miss up to 25% of what is being said in a noisy restaurant! Here are some strategies that might help you hear better the next time you decide to eat out:

- Try to pick a quieter restaurant that has good acoustics (carpeted floors, windows with curtains, table linens, chairs with rollers, low ceilings)
- Call ahead and reserve a table in the least noisy part of the restaurant (away from kitchen, front door, bar area)
- Choose a well-lit restaurant—Also, sit with your back to the window, so that lighting is on the speaker's face, not in your eyes
- Pick a good time/day to dine (avoid Friday night or the lunch/dinner rush)
- Check out the restaurant's website to preview the menu/specials of the day
- Request that staff turn down background music
- Try to anticipate information the server is looking for and indicate your choice before being asked (salad with Italian dressing or baked potato vs. french fries)
- Try to dine with a small number of companions
- Choose a booth over a table
- Relax and try to enjoy the conversation! Don't get stuck on one or two missed words; instead, try to get most of the sentence so you don't fall behind.
- Make people aware of your hearing loss, so they are more understanding if you need to ask for repetition.
- Check to see if your hearing aids have directional microphones. This is a two microphone system within the hearing aid that will give you a hearing advantage for sounds coming from the front as opposed to the sides or rear. Most hearing aids have this feature and usually it works automatically. If you have this feature, remember to always turn and face the speaker in a noisy environment

because the reception is better from the front.

If you are really frustrated, most newer hearing aids can be equipped with a remote microphone which can really improve your ability to hear conversation in noise. You would simply ask your dining companion to wear a small wireless microphone, so that their conversation can be streamed to your hearing aids over the background noise. Let me know if you are interested. Here's to more successful dining experiences in the future!

### *Communication Tip:*

Remain interested and participate in the conversation. Be a good listener and stay engaged. If you realize that you are unable to listen at that particular time, set another time for the conversation!

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## *Did you know?*

Approximately 60% of people with hearing loss are between the ages of 21 and 65.

### *Stem Cells to Restore Hearing? It just might be possible!*

The FDA has approved a trial to evaluate the safety of using a child's own cord blood stem cells to regenerate cells in the inner ear, which could potentially restore a child's hearing! The study will follow 10 children who have a moderate to profound hearing loss over one year. Research already completed in mice with acquired (from noise or antibiotic) hearing loss showed inner ear repair. This is the first study of its kind and could show promise in repairing hearing loss rather than having to treat it with hearing aids!

### *Having difficulty communicating on the telephone?*

Call me for information regarding the Hamilton CapTel. It is a telephone that allows you to hear and read the phone conversation at the same time. Numbers are especially difficult to hear over the phone, so you could see that critical information as well as hear it. These are available for \$99 and you may even qualify for some money toward the purchase of the telephone!

Check out our website:  
[www.enttreatmentcenter.com](http://www.enttreatmentcenter.com)

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### *Teens and Hearing Loss:*

According to national estimates, 1 in 6 US adolescents has high frequency hearing loss. This type of hearing loss could be caused by exposure to noise from listening to portable MP3 players. Based on a poll completed by C. S. Mott Children's Hospital, 69% of parents are not talking to their teens about noise-induced hearing loss. Volume-limiting headphones are now available that can prevent listening devices from reaching potentially damaging levels. When parents were informed about these headphones, over half said they would be interested in purchasing them. However, only about one-third of the parents thought their children would use them. Noise induced hearing loss is not reversible, but it is preventable. This needs to become a common topic that is discussed between parents and their teen children. Please help spread the word!

### *Hearing Aid Tip*

Summer is here and with that can come humidity. We all know that moisture is not good for our hearing aids. It can cause them to be intermittent or to stop functioning completely. Take a look at your hearing aids and see if you notice moisture building up anywhere; inside the battery door is a common place that it collects. If moisture is present, it may be a good idea to purchase a drying kit for your aids. They range from \$15 to \$75 depending on the severity of the problem. In addition, there is now a waterproof hearing aid available from Siemens and Phonak, which would obviously be the best way to solve any moisture related issues!