

ENT Treatment News

☪ Fall 2013 ☪

Audiologist—Kimberly Jones, AuD, CCC/A

HEARING AIDS ALONE ARE NOT ENOUGH - TRAIN YOUR BRAIN TO LISTEN

BROOKFIELD – We don't really hear in our ears; we actually hear in our brain. Hearing aids can help a person detect sound, but they don't necessarily provide good listening skills. There is a fundamental difference between hearing and listening. I have normal hearing, but I am not always a good listener. Hearing is a physical function that requires an auditory system that allows access to sound. Listening is a skill that requires great effort.

Good listening skills are essential for effective communication. Hearing aids may be technically advanced, but alone cannot produce listening skills crucial for communication. To be a good listener, one must be able to attend, understand and remember. Unfortunately, many of these cognitive skills deteriorate as we age. For instance, people may have short term memory

issues or may not be able to understand rapid speech. This would affect their ability to listen well.

Some people wait many years before deciding to get a hearing device. Therefore, the brain hasn't heard many common environmental or speech sounds in a while. It becomes "lazy" and needs to be stimulated again. Hearing aids are able to improve speech understanding in noise, but they are not able to remove the noise. When people are fit with hearing aids for the first time, they often state that environmental sounds interfere with speech. The brain needs to relearn how to ignore the sound of the refrigerator, for example, in order to listen to a conversation. This requires practice; wearing the hearing aids full time allows your brain to learn to listen again.

Gaining confidence in your

ability to hear is also critical. When people lose confidence in their ability to communicate, they begin to drop out or avoid conversation. Some people with hearing loss develop counter-productive behaviors to help them cope in difficult listening situations; they may nod their heads as if they heard or monopolize the conversation so they don't have to rely on their hearing. Instead, patients can use strategies to help train their brain to listen more effectively.

Here are some strategies:

- Listen to an audio book, but have the print copy available to use if you miss a word.
- Have closed-caption active when you are watching TV.
- Have a family member read a newspaper article while you listen. Then, read the article to see how well you followed along.

As you improve, you can move to a noisier environment.

- Go to sensesynergy.com and complete *Read My Quips* exercises.
- Download the Starkey app titled *Hear Coach* and play the listening games.

Be realistic in your expectations. Remember that all people have difficulty understanding speech in difficult listening environments. In fact, normal hearing people miss as much as 25% of the conversation in a noisy restaurant and as much as 35% in a busy party situation. You are not the only one missing things! If you are struggling, ask another person if they are having difficulty as well. You may be surprised in their response!

Relax and try to enjoy re-connecting with those important people in your life!

Special Offer!

**Save Up To \$300 Off a Hearing Aid Purchase
With a Free Hearing Screen for New Clients!**

As a special offer to new clients, I'm giving you the opportunity to receive a 10% discount on any new hearing aid package up to a maximum of \$300 with this coupon. This offer is for new clients only and not valid with other offers. This offer expires on December 15, 2013. To arrange for your free hearing screen, please call my office today at 262-780-4444. Please mention this ad when you call and bring this coupon with you on your office visit.

Did You Know?

75% of people who could benefit from hearing aids are not using them. Spread the word - Let people know how well you are doing with your hearing aids, so that we can help more people hear the benefits of better hearing!

Communication Tip:

Try to polish your listening skills. This may be difficult for new hearing aid wearers, because they have become used to "tuning out" conversations. Watch the speaker's mouth instead of looking down. Try to follow the topic of conversation, even if you miss a few words or phrases. If you begin to get lost in the conversation, kindly ask the speaker to pause for a moment and rephrase what was last said.

Expected Range of Battery Life:

Refer to the following chart to determine if your hearing aid battery life falls within the range of normal!

Size 10	3 to 10 Days
Size 312	3 to 12 Days
Size 13	6 to 14 Days
Size 675	9 to 20 Days

Kimberly Jones, AuD, CCC/A Audiologist
Ear, Nose, & Throat Treatment Center
19475 W. North Ave., Ste. 301
Brookfield, WI 53045

*Information On Up To
\$300 Savings Offer Within
This Issue!*

Clear Speech

You can greatly improve your ability to understand speech, if you teach your friends or family members how to use a technique called Clear Speech. We all lip-read, and it is much easier to do so if the speaker talks clearly. Researchers have shown that you can gain a 20% increase in speech understanding by asking people to speak more clearly. Kindly ask your friends and family members to do these four things:

- Slow down a bit
- Speak a tiny bit louder
- Say things as clearly as possible without exaggerating mouth movements

- Pause at meaningful places so that your ears can catch up with their mouths (My husband's sister (pause) is coming to visit us (pause) in April.)

Clear Speech not only helps you, but it also helps your communication partner as they will not need to repeat as much. You may find that most people will speak clearly for about three to five sentences, and then they will fall into poor speaking habits again. You may need to develop a signal that will remind them to continue to use Clear Speech.

Check out our website:
www.enttreatmentcenter.com