

# ENT Treatment News

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## Meniere's Disease

### BROOKFIELD —

Meniere's Disease was discovered in 1861 by Prosper Meniere who described the group of symptoms for the disease. The symptoms include a fluctuating, usually one-sided, hearing loss, intermittent dizziness, ear fullness and tinnitus. There is no test that can confirm a Meniere's diagnosis, so physicians will say you may have the disease if you exhibit some or all of these symptoms.

Meniere's disease affects about 615,000 people according to the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders. About 45,000 new cases are diagnosed annually. It can affect people of all ages, but most commonly persons ages 40-60.

The cause of Meniere's Disease is felt to be endolymphatic hydrops, which is excess fluid in the inner ear. People speculate that the increase in fluid could be caused by blood vessel constrictions, like in migraine headaches. It could also be caused by autoimmune conditions, viral infections, allergic reactions or head trauma. Meniere's appears to be hereditary in nature, so there may be a gene mutation as well.

There are some different treatment choices for persons with Meniere's Disease:

**Medical Therapy:** It is often recommended that patients begin a low salt diet to reduce fluid retention. Diuretics are sometimes prescribed for that same purpose.

Vestibular suppressants may be used to control patient's dizziness. Approximately, 85% of persons with Meniere's Disease are treated medically.

**Intratympanic Steroids:** A steroid solution is delivered to the middle ear space. The steroid seeps into the inner ear from there. They are low risk and easy to administer in the doctor's office.

**Endolymphatic Sac Surgery:** This procedure is done in the operating room under general anesthesia. It retains the function of the inner ear. The surgery decompresses the endolymphatic sac, which sometimes reduces the dizziness. The success rate is about 50%.

**Intratympanic Gentamicin:** This antibiotic can be delivered to the middle ear to try to reduce the function of the balance system.

**Vestibular Nerve Section:** The balance portion of the 8th (auditory-vestibular) nerve is cut, sparing the hearing portion. This is rarely performed as there are less invasive options available.

**Labyrinthectomy:** This is a surgical removal of the inner ear. It is definitive in eliminating the balance system. It remains the treatment option of choice for patients who have poor hearing. It is typically used as a last resort.

*Hearing Health Foundation*

### *Special Offer!*

*Save Up To \$500 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 \$500 with this coupon. This offer is for new clients only and not valid with other offers. This offer expires on June 15, 2016. 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?*

*Hearing loss affects friends and family. A British study reported that almost 1 in 2 (44%) said that relationships with their social circle had suffered because of poor hearing.*

#### *Can Our Ears Detect Cancer Cells?*

Andrew King from the University of Oxford states that our ears can detect changes in sound that occur after just a few milliseconds. In comparison, our eye's limit for detecting a flickering light is 50-60 times per second. Therefore, the ear is able to pick up subtle patterns and is faster at transmitting neural signals than other parts of the brain. These quickly occurring events would be missed by the eyes, but are easily picked up by the ears. Scientists can create audio from silent data by assigning a different sound to each change in data. Researchers in England have begun to apply this technology when deciding if cells are cancerous or not.

*Scientific American, March 2015*

#### *Is Hiding a Hearing Loss Really Better Than Wearing Hearing Aids*

People often mistakenly think they can hide their hearing difficulty. However, untreated hearing loss is far more noticeable than today's hearing aids. People are going to be aware of your hearing loss when you respond inappropriately in a conversation, lean in to hear better or ask "what" frequently. They may even start to have concerns about your mental acuity. Take the first step toward hearing better today!

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#### *Too Much Noise: Bad for your Heart as Well as Your Ears*

Recent research has found that people with long-term exposure to noise may be more likely to develop heart disease. Hearing loss and heart disease are closely connected in many ways. The inner ear is so sensitive to adequate blood flow that abnormalities in the cardiovascular system may be detected here earlier than in other less sensitive parts of the body. In fact, a low frequency hearing loss should alert practitioners to possible cardiovascular risk. Heart disease appears to intensify the degree of hearing decline. A 2014 study by researchers right here at the University of Wisconsin in Madison found that

hearing loss was significantly greater in people with hardening of the arteries, suggesting that hearing loss may be an early sign of heart disease. Smokers are at a greater risk for both heart disease and hearing loss. A higher intake of omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids has been shown to reduce the risk of heart disease. It has also been shown to reduce hearing loss in women.

*Better Hearing Institute*

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