

Sound BYTES

INFORMATION FOR YOUR EARS



HEARING DURING THE HOLIDAYS



One of the best aspects of the holiday season is that there are numerous opportunities to spend time with friends and family. When we gather with friends and family for the holidays, we're often in large, noisy groups. With all of that laughter and music playing in the background, the situation can be challenging for those with hearing loss. So ask yourself the following questions, "How did I or a loved one hear at the holidays?" Need a more objective way to answer this question? Take the American Speech Language Hearing Association Self-Test for hearing loss listed below to find out.

DO I HAVE A HEARING LOSS THAT NEEDS TO BE EVALUATED BY A PROFESSIONAL?

If you answer yes to more than two of the following questions, you should have your hearing evaluated further by a certified audiologist:

- Do you have a problem hearing over the telephone?
- Do you hear better through one ear than the other when you are on the telephone?
- Do you have trouble following the conversation with two or more people talking at the same time?

- Do people complain that you turn the TV volume up too high?
- Do you have to strain to understand conversation?
- Do you have trouble hearing in a noisy background?
- Do you have trouble hearing in restaurants?
- Do you have dizziness, pain, or ringing in your ears?
- Do you find yourself asking people to repeat themselves?
- Do family members or coworkers remark about your missing what has been said?
- Do many people you talk to seem to mumble (or not speak clearly)?
- Do you misunderstand what others are saying and respond inappropriately?
- Do you have trouble understanding the speech of women and children?
- Do people get annoyed because you misunderstand what they say?

Now is the time to act and not let another joyous holiday season slip by. The first step to hearing health and wellness is to recognize that you may have a hearing loss and schedule time with an audiologist to have a hearing evaluation. A hearing evaluation is an easy, painless test that is covered by most health insurances.

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TIPS

TIPS: PROTECT YOUR HEARING AIDS FROM THE SNOW



With wintery weather upon us, it is important to keep in mind some basic tips to make sure those hearing aids stay nice and dry. Unlike people, hearing aids actually don't mind the cold temperatures, but they certainly abhor moisture of any kind. Unless you're wearing a hat that covers the ears, be sure to keep the aids in a safe case when you're outdoors during a snowfall. It is generally not a good idea to wear the aids while shoveling snow, partly because you don't want to get the aids wet, but also because many hearing aids have been lost in the arduous bending and twisting. If an aid does get wet, the best thing to do is to open the battery compartment and place it in a hearing aid drying kit overnight. Generally, it will dry out and work well again; however, if an aid has been submersed in water it will likely need to be sent for repair. If there's ever a question, feel free to ask your Audiologist.



ASK THE EXPERT: TELEPHONE USE TIPS FOR USING YOUR HEARING AIDS WITH THE TELEPHONE

QUESTION: ARE YOU ABLE TO USE YOUR HEARING AIDS WITH THE PHONE?

Phone calls can be very difficult to hear when using hearing aids which can be due to the style of the hearing aid, noise in the environment, and the connection being received by the caller. Often people will state that they prefer to remove their hearing aid when talking on the phone. There are a number of different options available that can help with hearing better on the phone.

QUESTION: HOW DO I MAKE MY HEARING AIDS COMPATIBLE WITH THE PHONE?

- 1. Phone Programs:** Additional programs available in your hearing aid/s that can be manually accessed to help on the phone. These options do require correct placement of the phone near the hearing aid and a strong magnetic connection with the phone, which tends to be strongest in landline phones. The placement of the phone near the hearing aid can be directly on the ear with an in-the-ear style but requires the phone headset to be held up higher on the ear for a behind-the-ear hearing aid in order to get the best signal.
- 2. Captioned and Amplified Landline Phones:** Amplified telephones help to give extra volume to the phone conversation and can be purchased at stores such as Best Buy. Captioned phones do require internet in the home and will amplify the phone conversation but will also have a written display of the conversation.

- 3. Hearing Aid Accessories:** Additional devices that can be paired to cell phones via Bluetooth to stream the phone conversation directly from the phone to the hearing aids. The streamed call will be received in both hearing aids giving much better speech intelligibility and making the phone call hands free.
- 4. Made for iPhone Hearing Aids:** These hearing aids can be paired directly to the phone, without accessories and extra programs, and can stream phone calls via low frequency Bluetooth to the hearing aids. Research has shown that streaming the phone signal directly to both ears gives a 31-47% improvement in speech intelligibility with phone calls and makes listening to phone conversations easier in noisier environments.
- 5. FaceTime:** An iPhone app that gives the listener the ability to see the caller and hear the conversation at the same time. Adding visual cues during a phone conversation improves speech intelligibility of up to 77% in mild to moderate hearing loss and up to 72% in severe to profound hearing loss. This feature can make it easier for people with more severe hearing losses to be able to use the phone.

Please contact your hearing care professional if you would like more information on these options.

Jespersen, J.T., M.A., Kirkwood, B., PhD. (September 2016). Speech Intelligibility Benefits of FaceTime: Advantages for Everybody. *The Hearing Review*, 23, 20-25.