



## KISS OF DEAF



Valentine's day is a holiday when we think of love, hugs and kisses. All are wonderful; however, one spot to avoid kissing is by the ear. A kiss on the ear opening can create a strong suction force that pulls on the fragile eardrum. This intense force can lead to hearing loss. It can also result in other troubling ear symptoms like sensitivity to sound, ringing, distortion and a plugged sensation.

Dr. Levi Reiter, from Hofstra University, has been studying the phenomenon ever since a woman came to him with a strange story about going deaf in one ear immediately after her five-year-old kissed her there. Dr. Reiter wrote about the "kiss of deaf" in the publication *Newday*. Since the

article was published he has heard from others worldwide with similar experiences.

The prevalence of "Ear-kiss" patients is unknown. However, as with all sudden changes in hearing, prompt medical attention is paramount. If you experience any sudden change in hearing you do not want to wait to seek help, contact your ear, nose, and throat doctor to report your sudden hearing loss.

These "kiss of deaf" cases are rare; however, prevention of this type of hearing loss and permanent damage to the inner ear is as simple as resisting the urge to kiss another's ear. Although infants and children are cute and adorable, it is very important to not kiss their ears. Babies and small children are particularly vulnerable to hearing damage via kiss, simply because their ear canals are smaller. Unfortunately, in children the hearing loss may not be identified until years later, perhaps during a school screening.

"The Kiss of Deaf": A Case Study by Levi A. Reiter. *The Hearing Journal*. August 2008. Vol. 61, No. 8. pp. 32-37.

## QUICK TIPS FOR HEARING IN BACKGROUND NOISE



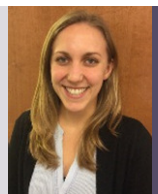
- 1) Face the speaker**
- 2) Know how your devices work best in background noise.** Typically, it is desirable to have as much background noise positioned to your back when possible.
- 3) Reduce background noise when possible.** Turn off common household items and noise sources, such as: faucets, TV, radio, fans and dishwashers, when having conversations.
- 4) Seek out quiet locations to carry on conversations.** This may require moving to another room or stepping away from noisy situations to improve the environment.
- 5) Utilize a remote microphone accessory.** A remote microphone is worn by the speaker and directly transmits their voice to your hearing aids, therefore, reducing the competing background noise.

## IN THIS ISSUE:

**PAGE 1:** Kiss of Deaf

**PAGE 2:** Datmond John: Hear Better, Live Better

Our "Ask the Expert,"  
Kasey Englebert, AuD



## HEAR BETTER, LIVE BETTER



Daymond John was at the Starkey Expo 2018, both as a presenter and an ambassador for hearing. He is known for his clothing line, FUBU, and as an entrepreneur on ABC's "Shark Tank." He was an entrepreneur at a young age, designing clothing in his home. On "Shark Tank," he sits on a panel listening to people pitch their product ideas in effort to convince the panelists to invest in their ideas and dreams.

John is a hearing aid wearer. He attended a number of music concerts throughout his life, which may have contributed to his hearing loss. He currently wears two red Starkey Halo 2 hearing aids. At the Starkey Expo he discussed what a huge difference the hearing aids have made on his life. He is an advocate for Starkey's mission and purpose of helping the world hear using the phrase "Hear Better, Live Better." John describes the Starkey Halo hearing aids as not being what you imagine hearing aids in the past to be. He is able to connect wirelessly to an iPhone and stream phone calls and music directly to his hearing aids. He stated that hearing aids have changed his life.

## ASK THE EXPERT: HEALTHY LIFESTYLE AND HEARING

### **Q: How does diet and exercise impact my hearing?**

A: Just as a healthy lifestyle helps to control weight, improve mood, combat diseases, and boost energy, it can also help protect your ears and help prevent hearing loss. A study published by the *International Journal of Audiology* reported that "a significant relationship between dietary nutrient intake and susceptibility to acquired hearing loss is emerging." The study looked at the Healthy Eating Index (HEI), and found that the better the HEI, the better the hearing.

### **Q: Are there any foods that may help improve hearing?**

A: There are not any foods known to improve hearing, but many minerals may help preserve hearing. *Before starting any supplement contact your primary care physician to discuss possible interactions with medications.*

**1) Potassium:** an important mineral found in the fluid of your inner ear, is responsible for regulating the fluid in your blood and tissues. *Foods high in potassium include potatoes, sweet potatoes, white beans, bananas, broccoli, and lentils*

**2) Folic Acid:** studies have shown that individuals with low levels of folic acid are more likely to develop age-related

hearing loss.<sup>1</sup> *Foods high in folic acid include leafy greens, citrus fruits, asparagus, broccoli, avocado, beans, peas, and lentils*

**3) Magnesium:** research at the University of Michigan Kresge Hearing Research Institute has shown people pretreated with magnesium were more protected from noise-related hearing loss. However, the most effective way to protect our ears from noise-induced hearing loss is to wear hearing protection devices in noisy environments.<sup>1</sup> *Foods high in magnesium include spinach, swiss chard, dark chocolate, almonds, black beans, and avocado*

### **Q: Are there any foods that can damage my hearing?**

A: Researchers believe diets high in sugars and carbohydrates could impair auditory function through their adverse effects on vascular health. Although, there is no one food that will damage your hearing, an overall healthy diet is linked to better hearing.

### **Q: What else can I include in my healthy lifestyle to help maintain my hearing?**

A: One research study discovered that consistent exercise helps reduce age-related inflammation, which in turn may help prevent some hearing loss related to aging.

1. Plotnick, Brande. *Foods that Boost Hearing: Be Mindful of your Minerals*. 2017.