



## CLINIC NEWS

It has been a busy year so far at Hearing Resource Center. We welcomed Zaan Z. Ali, Au.D., CCC-A, as a new audiologist. Dr. Ali has already met many of our patients, and is looking forward to meeting many more in the weeks to come.

We also fostered a new partnership with Cochlear Americas, working alongside UVA and VCU. This partnership will allow us to better serve the full range of our patients' hearing needs. If you are considering a cochlear implant or need assistance with an existing device, schedule an appointment with Dr. Ali, our in-house cochlear implant specialist.



## SLEEPING WITH TINNITUS: How to Get a Good Night's Rest



**If you experience a persistent ringing in your ears, you are not alone:** some 50 million people across the U.S. experience tinnitus. For some, it is an occasional nuisance that is easily ignored. But for those less fortunate, tinnitus can interfere with many aspects of their daily lives—including getting a good night's sleep.

There are steps you can take to help lessen the nightly impact of tinnitus and ensure a good night's sleep. Try the following:

- 1. Establish a regular bedtime routine and stick with it.** Going to bed at the same time every night—even on the weekends—will help “train” your body that it's time to shut down and get some sleep. Put away your phone and other electronic devices—these emit blue light that can interfere with sleep.
- 2. Clear your mind before bedtime.** Try meditation or relaxation exercises such as deep breathing, visualizing appealing experiences and sensations, and progressive relaxation.
- 3. Sleep in a darkened room.** If your bedroom window faces a bright external light source, try room-darkening shades.
- 4. Keep your bedroom cool.** Turning down the thermostat can help keep you comfortable and promote a good night's sleep.
- 5. Use white noise.** White noise is very effective at masking distracting background sounds and helping your brain to focus. You can buy a white noise machine specifically geared for this purpose, but an air conditioner, fan or humidifier is just as effective.
- 6. Exercise regularly.** Not only will exercise keep you healthier; it helps tire your body, which leads to better sleep. Just be sure not to exercise too closely to bedtime, as this can potentially leave you wired.

**These techniques should help you sleep better with tinnitus. If you're still having difficulty, it's best to seek the advice of a hearing professional.**



## THE EFFECTS OF HEARING LOSS ON THE SPOUSE

### If you are suffering from hearing loss, you're not alone.

While an estimated 48 million American adults experience some degree of hearing loss, those closest to you—your immediate family—are affected even if they don't share your hearing impairment. Your spouse, in particular, may have a difficult time dealing with your hearing loss.

**Many spouses complain of a lack of communication.** They resent having to repeat themselves, and adopt strategies such as positioning themselves in front of their husband or wife when speaking, encouraging lip reading and relying on handwritten notes. The big effect is on everyday activities, mainly television and telephone use. Spouses must deal with increased volume when the TV is on, making it uncomfortable for them to watch television in the same room. They also tend to be the ones to answer



and make all telephone calls. There is also a reduction in social activities, with the hearing impaired partner more likely to want to stay at home rather than venture out and put him or her in a potentially uncomfortable situation.

Naturally, these factors lead to resentment and put a strain on the marriage. Increased tension often leads to a lack of intimacy, causing serious damage to the relationship.

**If you are hearing impaired and married, there are steps you can take to improve your relationship with your spouse and ease his or her burden. If you own hearing devices, use them—and if you don't, speak with your audiologist to see if they will help.** There is a direct correlation between hearing device use and relationship satisfaction. Of equal importance: accept your condition rather than wallowing in self-pity or despair. Nobody wants to have difficulty hearing, but dealing with it in a positive manner can go a long way toward

maintaining a solid marriage. When you accept your impairment, your spouse is more willing to help and it's easier for both of you to adapt to the situation.

## Hearing Loss Affects Kids Too

**Three million children under 18 years old suffer from hearing loss**, including nearly four of every one thousand newborn babies.\* In most cases, hearing issues aren't discovered in kids until they are at least two years old.

The first two years of a child's life are hugely important in physical development as well as in forming emotional, learning and communication skills. Because of this, babies with moderate to severe hearing loss often experience major developmental setbacks.



Infant hearing loss is very difficult to detect, which is why many cases go undiagnosed until the child reaches talking age. Symptoms include:

- Not responding to their name.
- Not imitating sound.
- Not turning their head to the direction of your voice.
- Not babbling.

The best way to identify and treat hearing loss is to take your child to an audiologist for a hearing screening. Common hearing tests for babies and children include:

- **Auditory brainstem response (ABR)** provides an audiologist with information on a child's inner ear and the neural pathway that connects the ear to the brain.
- **Otoacoustic emissions (OAE)** testing uses a microphone and earphone to calculate an infant's hearing abilities by measuring the reflection of a sound's echo as it passes through the ear canal. Otoacoustic emissions are the sounds given off by the inner ear when stimulated by sound.
- **Tympanometry** is a test of the middle ear used to detect fluid, wax buildup, eardrum perforations and tumors. It measures movement of the eardrum in response to air pressure; the results are recorded on a chart called a tympanogram.
- **Acoustic reflex tests** measure involuntary muscle contractions of the middle ear and is used to determine the location of your hearing problem (the ossicles, cochlea, auditory nerve, etc.) as well as the type of hearing loss.

Take advantage of this opportunity to care for your child's hearing health. Schedule a hearing evaluation today.

\* <http://www.entnet.org/node/1255>