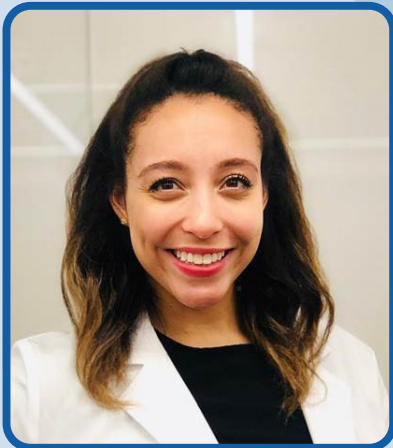




CLINIC NEWS

There are lots of new faces here at Hearing Resource Center. Sydney Ross, Au.D., CCC-A, is our newest audiologist. Originally from Virginia, Dr. Ross hails most recently from Charlotte, North Carolina, where she completed training in adult and pediatric diagnostics, hearing aids, cochlear implants, electrophysiology and vestibular testing.

We also welcomed three new externs this summer. Each is completing their fourth-year fellowship at Hearing Resource Center. Make sure to say hello to our new team members at your next appointment.



SYDNEY ROSS
Au.D., CCC-A

THE BENEFITS OF TELEHEALTH

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OUR TELEHEALTH SERVICES!



Far greater than just a social distancing tool, telehealth is changing the way we're able to care for you and your family.

In these unprecedented times of the novel virus, COVID-19, many health care workers are turning to telehealth—the convergence of telecommunication (phone calls, video chats, text messages) and health—primarily to suppress the spread of the virus whilst still providing health care.

Though the benefits of this invaluable tool go way beyond combatting infectious diseases. Bridging all long-distant patient gaps, lack of transport, mobility, economic status, restricted staff—the list is plentiful. Add to that improvements in practice efficiency and overall patient satisfaction and it's a win-win for all involved.

Zooming in on audiological care, telehealth, or teleaudiology as it's known in the hearing world, is enabling audiologists to test patients' hearing right from the comfort of their own homes via computer equipment. Furthermore, smartphone apps, in combination with technological advancements in hearing aids themselves, allow audiologists to actually program and adjust hearing aids remotely.

In one recent study at the University of South Dakota Speech, Language, and Hearing Department of hearing loss patients with dementia, researchers even found that teleaudiology can be even more effective than regular audiologic care.

Monitored and cared for remotely via real-time video calls, text and voice chat services, providers rated patients' "general comprehension" as 4.5 on average on a 5-point scale in the teleaudiology period, compared to 2.7 when they weren't using the remote service, adding that the remote service both decreased patients' stress and improved their "alertness" and "awareness."¹

Our office is open for in-person appointments, and we continue to offer telehealth and curbside services to meet our patients' diverse needs.

If you'd like to take advantage of our teleaudiology services, or if you have any questions at all, please contact the office directly at (540) 371-1263.



STILL SHELTERING IN PLACE? TRY THESE SIMPLE, FUN HEARING EXERCISES

Many of us have been under shelter-in-place orders for weeks on end, with no real end in sight. Those with hearing loss can stave off boredom while sharpening their hearing and listening skills with the following exercises.

1. Exercise #1: Filter noise at home.

Sound filtering involves focusing on the essential while filtering out unnecessary background noise. This allows you to follow conversations more easily in noisy, crowded settings such as restaurants. To do this exercise, invite a friend over and prepare several sources of noise: music, TV, a laptop computer, etc.. Begin a conversation with your friend and turn on one of the devices. Practice focusing on their words rather than the competing distraction; after you're comfortable listening and speaking, turn on another device. Repeat until you can focus your attention on the conversation.



2. Exercise #2: Identify and locate sounds. Many people with impaired hearing have difficulty because they are unable to locate the source of a sound. To become better at this, go someplace where it's busy and noisy, such as a shopping mall. Find a comfortable spot to sit, close your eyes, and try to focus on specific sounds in order to determine the source of the noise. You might listen for a talking child or shoes clicking by. If you're having trouble, ask yourself questions such as, how big is the object making the

noise? How does it make me feel?

These mental exercises will help you figure out where sounds are coming from and improve your mental focus.

3. Exercise #3: Brain games. A sharp, clear mind improves all your senses—not just your hearing. Mental exercises can help you learn to distinguish sounds better. There are endless choices; look for logic games, crossword and jigsaw puzzles, memory games, chess or Scrabble. Or concentrate on a specific activity, such as drawing a picture. The more you work out your brain, the better your hearing will be.

Does Cold Weather Affect Your Hearing?

Hearing loss has many causes, and in many cases, can be prevented. What many don't know is that cold weather can actually cause hearing loss. Exostosis, commonly known as "surfer's ear," is a condition that causes bone to thicken, leading to a narrowing (and occasionally a complete blockage or "occlusion") of the ear canal. It can result in significant conductive hearing loss over time. Exostosis is common not just for surfers, but those who ski, snowboard, fish, kayak and sail.

Symptoms of Exostosis

As the ear canal narrows, water, dirt and earwax can become trapped inside, resulting in frequent ear infections. The infections, a loss of hearing and the sensation of "plugged up" ears that do not drain are the primary symptoms of surfer's ear. The condition itself is not dangerous, but left untreated, the danger of occlusion and accompanying hearing loss increases.

Treatment for Exostosis

Treatment usually involves an outpatient surgical procedure known as canalplasty. This procedure is performed under general anesthesia. A surgeon uses a binocular microscope and drills or



chisels out the bone growth. The surgeon usually performs this surgery through the ear canal, but may also make an incision behind the ear. While recovering from this procedure, it is very important not to expose the ear canal to water, as this could lead to further infections. Recovery takes between a few weeks and a few months.

Preventing Exostosis

Avoiding outdoor sports, especially surfing and swimming, in extremely cold water or unusually windy conditions, is the key to preventing surfer's ear. In addition, keeping the ear canals warm and dry by wearing earplugs, a swim cap or a hood can all help. Custom earmolds are your best bet to ensuring a tight seal and all-day comfort.

To learn more or to get your own set of custom earmolds, call today to schedule an appointment.