

You're invited to a special Widex event!

May is Better Hearing and Speech Month. Join us for a special event on May 3 and 4 to celebrate. You will receive a free hearing screening and free rechargeable upgrade with no fitting fee. **Call to reserve your spot today.**

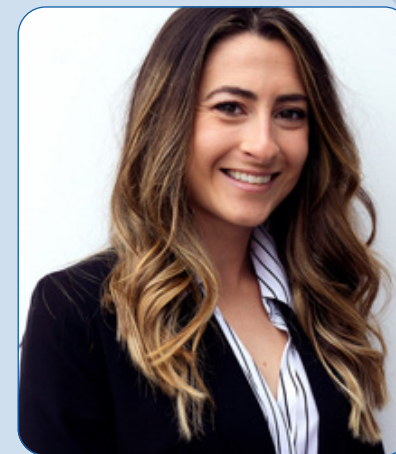
(540) 371-1263



CLINIC NEWS

Happy Better Hearing and Speech Month! May will be especially busy for us here at Hearing Resource Center, as our audiology fellows will be graduating from their doctorate programs and completing their fellowships with us. A big thank you to all our fellows for their hard work over the last year!

We are excited to announce that Lauren Levengood, soon to be Dr. Levengood, will be staying on with us as a full-time audiologist. We will also be welcoming three new fellows for the next year. We look forward to introducing you to our new fellows at your next appointment.



Lauren Levengood
Audiology Fellow

Did You Know May Is BETTER HEARING & SPEECH MONTH?

May is Better Hearing & Speech Month, an annual occasion designed to raise awareness of hearing loss and speech problems.

Originally created in 1927 by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) in 1986, President Reagan issued a formal proclamation designating May as the official month to heighten public awareness around hearing loss and speech disorders.

Better Hearing & Speech Month aims to encourage people to take action if they believe there might be a problem with their hearing or speech. The organization has traditionally chosen a theme to build conversations around. This year's theme? 'Building Connections'—perfectly timed for the new normal pandemic era.

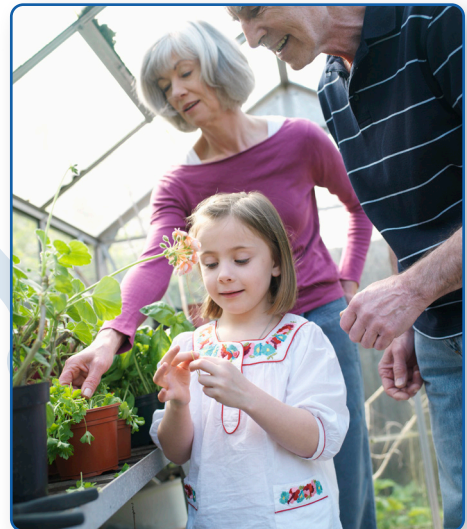
Many in the hearing care industry take advantage of the opportunity to educate people during May. They've got a large potential audience: an estimated 48 million Americans and counting suffer from hearing loss.¹

In fact, hearing and communication issues are greater than they ever have been in the modern era, with masks woven into our daily wardrobes—muffling speech, muddling lip-reading cues and more.

Research has shown that wearing a mask attenuates the wearer's high frequencies by three to four decibels for a simple medical mask and close to 12 decibels for N95 masks.² Twelve decibels may not be a big issue for those with normal hearing, but it can quickly turn a nuisance into a communication breakdown for those with hearing loss.

Fortunately, hearing exams are still the best way to detect hearing loss early. They enable an audiologist to identify problems before they worsen and recommend treatment to those who might otherwise suffer debilitating social and emotional effects of the condition, including depression, isolation, memory loss and cognitive loss.

If you notice problems with your hearing or suspect a loved one may be suffering from hearing loss, heed the message of Better Hearing & Speech Month and contact Hearing Resource Center today for a hearing exam—(540) 371-1263.



¹ Hearing Loss Association of America. (n.d.). Hearing Loss Facts and Statistics. Retrieved December 28, 2020, from https://www.hearingloss.org/wp-content/uploads/HLAA_HearingLoss_Facts_Statistics.pdf?pdf=FactStats

² Goldin A, Weinstein BE, Shiman N. How do medical masks degrade speech perception? Hearing Review. 2020;27(5):8-9

Spring into Summer with **CLEAN HEARING AIDS**

Have you ever thought about cleaning your hearing aids? Regular clean & checks are the best way to preserve your important investment.

Regular maintenance can help extend the life of your hearing aids and is a must considering the conditions they are exposed to on a regular basis. Moisture, heat, earwax and dirt can all damage electronic components unless cleaned properly.

Most hearing health care providers sell a multi-tool, a versatile cleaning tool that consists of a wire loop, magnet and brush. This is useful for removing wax and dirt from hard-to-reach nooks and crannies in your hearing aids, and the magnet aids in battery removal. If a multi-tool is not available, you can usually buy each component separately.

There are steps you can take at home to care for your hearing devices and optimize their effectiveness. Try the following cleaning tips this summer!

**Regular maintenance
can help extend the life
of your hearing aids.**

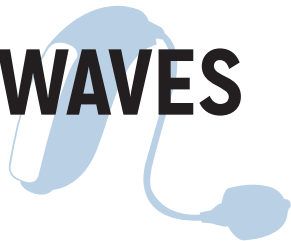
- Be sure to apply hairspray and facial lotions before inserting your hearing aids. The same applies to face washing. Harsh products create a sticky residue that is a magnet for dust and dirt.
- Wash and dry your hands before you handle your hearing devices.
- It's important to clean your hearing devices over a soft surface (a folded towel, for example) to prevent damage if dropped.
- Clean your hearing devices each day with a dry, soft cloth.
- Do not use water, cleaning fluids, solvents or alcohol, as they can damage your hearing devices.
- Don't overlook the microphone inlet, which can become clogged with debris, and the battery contacts, which attract dust and dirt.
- Storage containers will help minimize moisture in your hearing devices and lengthen their life. Remove the batteries from your device before placing them in the containers.
- Perform listening checks with a listening tube to ensure your hearing devices sound clear, not weak or scratchy. If you notice any changes in quality, make an appointment with your audiology clinic.
- Do not attempt to make any adjustments or repairs to your hearing device by yourself.
- Maintain good hygiene by keeping your ears clean. Do not use a cotton swab or bobby pin in your ears. Instead, purchase over-the-counter ear drops to flush out debris.

While these home steps can help, the best way to ensure your devices are working properly is to bring them into Hearing Resource Center for a clean & check with one of our audiologists. This service is free if the hearing aids are still in office warranty. However, if the warranty has expired this service costs only a nominal fee and will include a complete inspection of your hearing devices. The receivers, microphones, volume control buttons and battery doors will all be inspected and cleaned. Your hearing devices will also be tested to make sure they are performing to standards, and will be placed in a machine to remove any moisture in the devices.

To learn more about care for your hearing aids, don't hesitate to give us a call—(540) 371-1263.



The Tiny LEGO Making **BIG WAVES** in the Hearing Community



As society progresses, certain toy manufacturers have come under pressure in recent years, if not taking the initiative on their own, to rethink inclusivity in their designs, and the hearing community has not been left out.

Around 2015, a not-for-profit campaign by *ToyLikeMe* launched a movement of sorts that convinced LEGO® to move forward with a Minifigure with a hearing aid.

Established by artist and activist Rebecca Atkinson, who is partially deaf and partially sighted, ToyLikeMe created mock Duplo figures that included deaf, visually impaired and wheelchair disabilities. The group then printed the image onto postcards and asked children to write to LEGO to have the designs made. ToyLikeMe also sent them to LEGO's head of design.³

The system worked—LEGO unveiled its first Minifigure in a wheelchair in 2016 in its LEGO City People Pack series and followed it up with a Minifigure with hearing aids in said series just this past summer in 2020.

Though LEGO is certainly not the first toy manufacturer to be more inclusive to the hearing community with their toy designs—Build-A-Bear® introduced a hearing aid accessory for its stuffed animals in 2005 and Lottie Dolls unveiled a wildlife doll with a cochlear implant in 2017—with its new Minifigure donning a hearing aid, the conversation around normalizing hearing loss as able to continue to reach more and more people.

Whether a child or adult, deaf or hard of hearing or not, LEGO fans worldwide can now interact with a more positive depiction of hearing loss and one that is just as normal as other LEGO figures.

The LEGO Minifigure with the hearing aid is currently only available in set 60271: Main Square. You can buy the head element on its own via LEGO.com.

Concerned you or someone in your family may have hearing loss? Contact Hearing Resource Center today to schedule a hearing screening—(540) 371-1263.



3 Published by Lisa A. Goldstein. (2020, September 18). LEGO adds MINIFIGURE with a hearing aid. Retrieved February 25, 2021, from <https://www.hearinglikeme.com/lego-minifigure-with-a-hearing-aid/>