

# Cortland Hearing News



Hearing news you can use!

Fall 2013

## What Causes a Hearing Loss?

- Hearing loss happens for many reasons. Some people lose their hearing slowly as they age. This condition is called presbycusis. Doctors do not know why presbycusis happens, but it seems to run in families.
- Another cause is the ear infection otitis media, which can lead to long-term hearing loss if it is not treated.
- Hearing loss can also result from taking certain medications. "Ototoxic" medicines damage the inner ear, sometimes permanently. Some antibiotics are ototoxic. Even aspirin can cause problems, but they are temporary. Check with your doctor if you notice a problem while taking a medication.
- Heredity also is a cause of hearing loss, but not all inherited forms of hearing loss take place at birth. Some forms can show up later in life. In otosclerosis, which is thought to be a hereditary disease, an abnormal growth of bone prevents structures within the ear from working properly. A severe blow to the head also can cause hearing loss.
- Sudden sensorineural hearing loss is an abrupt loss of most or all hearing in one or both ears. Sudden sensorineural hearing loss (SSHL) is widely defined as 30 dB or more sensorineural hearing loss over at least three consecutive audiometric frequencies occurring within 3 days or less.
- One of the most common causes of hearing loss is loud noise. Loud noise can permanently damage the inner ear. Loud noise also contributes to presbycusis, or age-related hearing loss, and tinnitus, which is a ringing, buzzing, or roaring sound in the ears.

## Hearing Instruments and the Fountain of Youth

The qualities of youth have been prized throughout the history of western civilization. The perception of youth has always been a vision of strength, independence, and health; qualities so sought after that they prompted Spanish conquistadors to stumble upon the continents of Central and South America in their quest to find the mythical "fountain of youth!"

Since these times, we've learned that there is no actual fountain of youth to reverse the effects of aging, but modern technology has provided many tools to counteract the negative effects age has on quality of life. Advances in healthcare allow modern doctors to keep the human body functioning much longer, and provides older people with solutions to experience their golden years with greater satisfaction.

Modern audiology and hearing health are great examples of technology-in-action; technology that helps stave off the negative effects of aging. It is widely known that one's sense of hearing deteriorates over time. For many reasons—age, genetics, exposure to loud sounds, and others—hearing loss is very common in older people, and occurs in varying degrees. Although modern medicine can't magically restore one's sense of hearing to its condition during youth (like the fabled "fountain of youth"), it has provided solutions that allow people to hear as well as they did in younger days.

The funny thing about our culture's admiration and value of youth and independence is the degree to which we cling to these ideals. Innovations in hearing devices can help a person attain some or all of what is lost. But despite awareness that their bodies are aging and not functioning as well as they used to, many older people resist seeking and using what technology has made available!

Some would rather suffer the effects of aging silently than simply admit that youth is fleeting and seek a solution. In the case of hearing health, which usually deteriorates very gradually, older people are often reluctant to even admit to themselves that their hearing is not as effective as it used to be!

The solutions to hearing loss that technology has provided—such as hearing aids and assistive listening devices—are taboo in the eyes of older people; proof that their age is catching up with their bodies, and a telltale sign that they are not as young as they may feel or envision themselves. "I'm too young to wear a hearing aid!" or "Hearing devices are for people older than me!" are common responses from patients diagnosed with hearing loss.

Ironically enough, resistance to using the hearing devices technology offers keep older people from the desired quality they seek so stubbornly—youthful hearing! They scoff at the need for hearing devices because they perceive them as an outward sign of age. In reality, the hearing devices make their ears function effectively—as they did during their youth! This dilemma is a matter of perception in the eyes of older people. While

*continued on the back*



**Dr. Suzette Pace, Au.D.** looks forward to seeing you soon. Call **Cortland Hearing Aids** today at **607.756.1053** to schedule your next appointment!



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## Hearing Instruments and the Fountain of Youth

they're caught avoiding the appearance of using hearing aids, they live a lifestyle that cries out, "I'm too old to hear!"

This lifestyle is not as well masked as people with hearing loss may think it is...

Each time an older person asks someone to repeat a statement just spoken clearly, the older person is advertising his or her hearing loss and age. When fudging comprehension during a conversation, family members and friends can tell when someone does not comprehend; the nodding and smiling by the older person often does little, other than confirm that what was said was not heard clearly. Another sure sign of ignored hearing loss is the high volume at which older people speak or set their TV or radio. When speaking twice as loud as others in a quiet setting or listening to the television at maximum volume in a peaceful room, no one nearby is assuming the person has keen, youthful ears.

On the other hand, the use of hearing devices helps to outwardly portray the desired younger appearance many older people seek. Aside from the presence of the device—most of which are very

small and difficult to notice without looking—using these gifts of technology is a great step toward making the user appear younger! An older person using hearing devices can hold a seamless conversation without repeats, as they would have in years past. An older person hearing effectively with the help of a hearing device appears to be more independent and healthy—he or she can function in conversation and elsewhere without assistance.

Consider it this way—would you be more likely to notice a tiny device in or behind someone's ear, or the questions "Could you repeat that?" and "What was that?" asked again and again during a conversation?

In closing, there's no way to change our society's value of youth and independence—these ideals are part of the fabric of western culture. In addition, there is no magical spring to return an older person to the state of their youth. Aging—and the effects it has on the human body—are a part of life. There are, however, solutions to getting the most possible out of your body today and for years to come, as shown through true hearing health. You just have to look at these solutions, and the results they provide, from the proper perspective!

### Referral Rewards Program

The greatest compliment our practice can receive is the referral of a friend or family member by one of our satisfied patients. When your friend or family member purchases hearing aids through us, they will receive a **\$50 discount**, and we will provide you with a **\$25 gift card!**

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