



Accent Hearing
EXCELLENCE IN LISTENING



The Listener

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Winter Edition - 2022

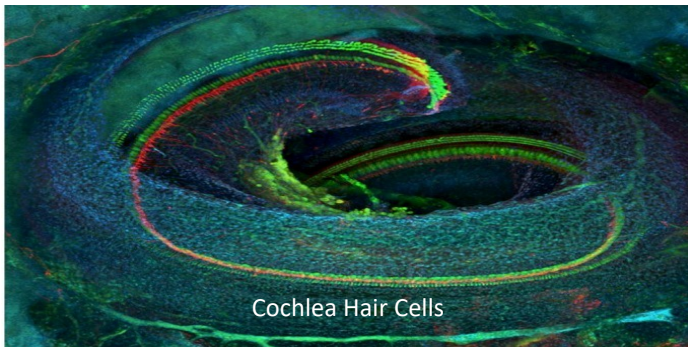
Grafton - Glen Innes - Inverell

www.accenthearing.com.au

Welcome to the Winter 2022 edition of Accent Hearing's Newsletter *The Listener*. Here we explore helpful hearing tips and news on all hearing matters.

What is SSNHL?

Despite decades of research, Sudden Sensorineural Hearing Loss (SSNHL) remains an enigma in many respects. Over 90% of cases are associated with an unknown cause. Approximately 60,000-65,000 new cases of SSNHL are documented annually in the US.



Cochlea Hair Cells

Possible etiologies include non-specific viral infections, bacterial infections, inflammation, head trauma, autoimmune disease, ototoxic drugs, attenuated blood flow or perfusion, neurological disorders, inner ear anomalies, neoplastic processes along the vestibular and/or cochlear nerves, and more.

The cochlea is entirely dependent on blood flow from a single artery (labyrinthine artery) without any collateral supply, making it extremely sensitive and susceptible to fluctuations. A recent study found that the neurovascular fluctuations in migraine sufferers places these patients at increased risk. There is no perfectly predictable successful treatment for SSNHL, however corticosteroid therapy remains the current mainstay of treatment in the United States & Australia. Corticosteroids can be administered via intratympanic injection (through the eardrum by an ENT) and orally, however the timing of corticosteroid delivery appears to be important and should be administered, ideally, during the first few days or first week of hearing loss onset. If you know of anyone who experiences a sudden hearing loss, "do not wait" as timing is critically.

Beck D, Grisel JJ. Sudden sensorineural hearing loss (SSNHL): A status report 2022 *Hearing Review*. 2022;29(3):14-18.

You have to wear your hearing aids to work out what you don't want to hear!

In other words, when trying to listen to a conversation in a very noisy environment, i.e. pub, club, busy coffee shop or restaurant, you have to actually train your brain to filter out what you 'don't want to hear'. It is not only about what you 'want to hear', but what you need to do in order to be able to hear what you want.

For those with hearing loss, the moment you take your hearing aids out in background noise, you are not exercising the brain hard enough to work out what you want to listen too. When you remove your hearing aids, you are back to square one before you were fitted with the devices and now back to struggling taking part in a conversation.

Wearing hearing devices all the time when in social situations is part of the initial training that you need to persevere with. This is part of your hearing rehabilitation program and is why you come back and see the Audiologist if the sound is not quite right or require further instruction on any management issue you are having. If you have not been shown how to turn down your devices should you need to in a very noisy environment to keep them in your ears, you need to make another appointment for a refresher. It does help if you can organise a family member to attend a review or fitting appointment, because 'two heads are better than one' in remembering things said.



Would you like to hear your favourite music again?

If you have been suffering from hearing loss for many years and your family has been telling you to go and have your hearing assessed, what do you think is stopping you?

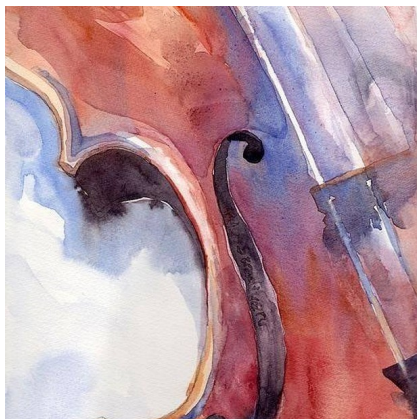
You probably think you'll be found out and you realise you actually have had the

hearing loss for many years. The fact that your close family members and friends have been telling you for longer than you can remember is quite common.

There is nothing to fear about having your hearing assessed regularly and quite frankly, your family will be glad you have done so. You won't actually know if you have a hearing loss until you step into a sound booth and have it assessed. There is no need to feel embarrassed about having a hearing loss, as you may have worked very hard all your life, having been exposed to excessive noise without the use of hearing protection. Today, hearing protection is mandatory and regulated in noisy working conditions. Previously, hearing protection was not required or even issued to workers many years ago.

Also, the sooner you have it assessed, the easier it will be to use hearing aids, should you require them. This is because your overall body will be in a much better condition than if you wait until you're over 70-80 years old. This is because 'neural plasticity' (the rewiring and adaptation) in the brain is much younger and active, resulting in much better hearing rehabilitation in getting used to the devices. Not to mention having much better dexterity in handling all management of the devices including the changing of small batteries, tubing and knowing how to trouble-shoot any problems easily. As we age, the increased allocation of cognitive resources is necessary, challenging even basic auditory tasks.

Our Audiologist has seen many problems arise, when the person with the hearing loss is finally forced in by a family member to which sometimes by then, has very poor dexterity and can't be bothered to use the hearing aids, not to mention lower brain activity taking much longer to get used to amplification. This puts much strain on the partner or friend living with them, now having actually do all the work in placing the hearing aids in their ears, changing batteries etc., and that is only if they want to wear them. So if you would like to hear your favourite music again, why not do something about it, instead of waiting until it's too late!



Excessive noise is an environmental issue in U.S.

From Letters to the Editor, Chicago Sun Times

Excessive noise is an often-neglected form of environmental pollution. We are constantly bombarded by excessive noise — from leaf blowers and lawn mowers, motorcycles, loud car stereos, barking dogs, helicopters, airplanes, noisy neighbors, car traffic, raucous restaurants, and honking horns.

All this acoustic chaos is very harmful. High noise levels are associated with heart disease, elevated blood pressure, hearing loss, sleep deprivation, ringing of the ears, headaches, and chronic fatigue.

Excessive noise is also a cause of reduced property values and decreased job and academic performance.

Noise is also a climate change issue. Lawn and garden equipment is responsible for around 5% of the nation's air pollution. An EPA study indicates that a petrol-powered leaf blower creates as much nitrogen oxide emissions and volatile organic compounds in one hour as 11 cars being driven for one hour.

Noise is also an ecosystem issue. High-intensity sound can induce fear, causing species to abandon their habitat. Birds are having to chirp louder because of the constant din. Since the 1960s, there has been a 16-fold increase in ocean noise, posing a threat to fish, dolphins, and other marine life.



In Australia, the excessive noise from a leaf blower can exceed the daily intake of safe noise exposure levels and is why the use of hearing protection i.e. ear muffs or foam ear plugs are required for safe use, including eyewear coverage also. Protecting your hearing is very easy these days.

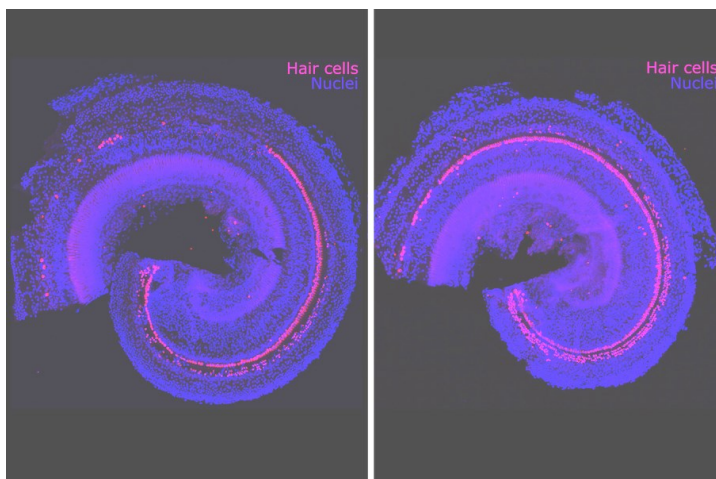
Please ask Accent Hearing staff about saving your hearing! We have a small range of hearing protection available instore.

EYEMUFFS can protect both Eyes & Ears!



MIT scientists develop new regenerative drug that reverses hearing loss

By Zach Winn, Massachusetts Institute of Technology



These images show cellular regeneration, in pink, in a preclinical model of sensorineural hearing loss. The control is on the left and the right has been treated. Credit: Hinton AS, Yang-Hood A, Schrader AD, Loose C, Ohlemiller KK, McLean WJ.

The biotechnology company Frequency Therapeutics is seeking to reverse hearing loss, but not with hearing aids or implants, but with a new kind of regenerative therapy. The company uses small molecules to program progenitor cells, a descendant of stem cells in the inner ear, to create the tiny hair cells that allow us to hear.

Hair cells die off when exposed to loud noises or drugs including certain chemotherapies and antibiotics. Frequency's drug candidate is designed to be injected into the ear to regenerate these cells within the cochlea. In clinical trials, the company has already improved people's hearing as measured by tests of speech perception — the ability to understand speech and recognise words.

"Speech perception is the No. 1 goal for improving hearing and the No. 1 need we hear from patients," says Frequency co-founder and Chief Scientific Officer Chris Loose PhD.

The company saw statistically significant improvements in speech perception in some participants after a single injection, with some responses lasting nearly two years. Progenitor cells reside in the inner ear and generate hair cells when humans are in utero, but they become dormant before birth and never again turn into more specialised cells such as the hair cells of the cochlea. Humans are born with about 15,000 hair cells in each cochlea. Such cells die over time and never regenerate.

The company has dosed more than 200 patients to date and has seen clinically meaningful improvements in speech perception in three separate clinical studies.

How to choose a restaurant when you have Hearing Loss

Here are some tips for a successful experience when dining out.

1. Provide information early. Note your desire for a quiet table in your reservation and remind the restaurant if they call to confirm. This gives them a better chance of meeting your needs than if you walk in cold. If they seat you at a less than ideal table at first, ask for a quieter spot, persistence often pays off.

2. Request a table in the corner. A corner table or other location beside a wall works best since there is a barrier between you and the rest of the restaurant noise. This also eliminates distractions from noise behind you and lets you better focus on the speakers at the table. A booth is also often a good choice if it has high back seats.

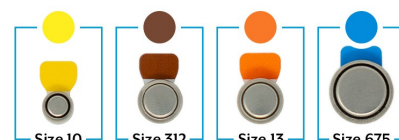
3. Choose restaurants of cafés with sound absorbing decor. Carpet, curtains, cushioned chairs, cloth tablecloths and acoustic tiles are the decor of choice. Many restaurants today prefer hard surfaces like glass and wood or concrete. Preview the decor online or look for "old school" restaurants/café's which may have a more classic design.

4. Read online reviews. Some restaurant rating systems now include noise level as one of the criteria, check them out if available.

5. Ask around. I like to trade restaurant tips with my hearing loss friends and also with my hearing friends. Once you hit a certain age, everybody wants a quiet restaurant! Ask your friends "do you have a go-to quiet restaurant in your area?"



Please Remember Your Battery Size



Are you a Government Pensioner?



Australian Government
Department of Health

If you are on the Hearing Services Program (pensioner), from 1 July 2021 you are able to get a yearly appointment to check your hearing, even if you don't have hearing

devices. Previously you were only eligible for a new test every 3 years. Clients will be entitled to an annual review from 12 months after their initial assessment or previous review. If you think your hearing has changed and it's been 12 months or more since you last had a hearing assessment, why not phone us to make an appointment.



Hearing Services Program

Accent Hearing is very well-known as an independent trusted and reliable referral for GP or ENT (Ear Nose & Throat) preferred practice for carrying out full diagnostic hearing assessments and successful hearing rehabilitation programs. This stems from Accent Hearing's history of constant integrity, quality assurance of assessments and effective rehabilitation programs over the last 10 years of practice.



That awkward moment..
When you've already said "What?" three times and still have no idea what the person said, so you just agree!



Queen Street Clinic Update.....

Our new Clinic is still in the process of having many renovations for it to become a commercial building. No moving date is set yet.

Thank you to our valued clients who have asked about our move to Queen Street and to some who have visited there to find out more. We will keep you posted.

Wax Problems?

Micro-suction is the preferred method to guarantee safe and effective removal of ear wax as well as other foreign bodies that may obstruct the ear canal. Consultations are with Dr Butcher, the only professional Doctor of Audiology on the North Coast and beyond.

Please note that an initial, investigative consultation may be required prior to performing the procedure. You will be asked a series of questions and sign a disclaimer in relation to your ear health before any procedure takes place.



*Please use a 'spray' wax softener effectively before your appointment, available at our clinic or your local chemist. We have instructions to give you for 'effective use' to avoid extra appointments.

Accent Hearing Clinics - 1300 859 828

- **GRAFTON** | L5 'The Link' 50 Prince Street, Grafton Shopping World, Grafton NSW.
- **GLEN INNES** | Glen Innes Chiropractic Centre, 113 Meade Street, Glen Innes NSW.
- **INVERELL** | Inverell Hospital Community Health, 41 Swanbrook Road, Inverell NSW.

Accent Hearing is independent and is locally owned. Our clinician Dr Greg Butcher is an Accredited University trained Doctor of Audiology; a full CCP Member of Audiology Australia & Independent Audiologists Australia; and a qualified Government & Medicare Hearing Services Provider.