



Accent Hearing
EXCELLENCE IN LISTENING



The Listener

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Summer Edition - 2022/2023

Grafton - Glen Innes - Inverell

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Welcome to the Summer 2022/2023 edition of Accent Hearing's Newsletter *The Listener*. Here we explore helpful hearing tips and news on all hearing matters.

What's in A Kiss? (Quite a lot!)

A sudden innocent kiss on a person's external auditory canal can lead to sensorineural hearing loss, which can be devastating and life-altering for the patient. This is also known as **Reiter's ear kiss syndrome** first described by Levi Reiter in 2008. Patients such as small children and infants have small and narrow ear canals and are, therefore, at higher risk of this hearing loss. Physicians, medical professionals, parents, and partners should be made aware of the risk associated with this innocent kiss. We should be able to quickly identify and start the treatment as soon as possible once the diagnosis is made to have a better chance of full recovery.

Humidity & Hearing Aids!



A kiss on the patient's external auditory canal creates a large vacuum or negative pressure, which causes an outward pressure on the tympanic membrane or (ear drum). This pressure on the tympanic membrane also creates negative pressure on the

small ear bones attached to the tympanic membrane, i.e., stapes, incus, and malleus. This causes dislodging of the stapes in the inner ear, and the fluid in the inner ear (also known as perilymph) leaks out and causes damage to the hair cells, leading to tinnitus and hearing loss.

There are infants out there who are experiencing this, but they can't say "Mummy, I can't hear in one ear," and the net result is that five years later, when they have a hearing test, no one will ever know to relate it to a kiss.

So as you go in for that kiss on a cheek be aware of: (1) the delicate nature of the hearing mechanism and how easily it can be damaged even under the most benign circumstances and (2) keep those kisses away from the ear. Goyal L, Ajmera K, Kaasam S, et al. (May 12, 2022) Tinnitus and Mild Hearing Loss From a Kiss. *Cureus* 14(5): e24955. doi:10.7759/cureus.24955

If you want your hearing aids to work without interruption, keeping them protected from moisture is the single most important thing you can do. They are full of high-tech circuit boards and microelectronics, and are particularly prone to the corrosive effects of humidity and perspiration. Here are a few **warning signs** that indicate your hearing aids may be on the way to failure:

- **Static or crackling sounds** — corrosion of electrical connections can create a lot of unwanted static in your ears.
- **Distorted sounds or fluctuations in volume** — damaged connections can create uneven performance in the audio output of your hearing aid.
- **Intermittent outages** — if your hearing aid suddenly turns off, then turns back on, corrosion may have damaged the contacts close to their final breaking point.

Please enquire about Electronic Dehumidifiers or Capsule Dry Aid kits, available at Accent Hearing.

Capsules & Drying Canister



Electronic Dehumidifier



Ten Tips For Better Conversations With Your Grandchildren

1. Tell them about your hearing loss.

The first step is letting them know that it is hard for you to hear them. You can show them your hearing aids and explain that your ears don't work as well as theirs do. For younger children that might be enough of an explanation, but older children will be interested in the scientific aspects. Visit websites like [KidsHealth](#) or [Dangerous Decibels](#) with them to explore how hearing works and the causes of hearing loss.



2. Ask them to get your attention first.

Explain that it is much easier for you to hear them if they get your attention first.

That way you can concentrate on what they are saying and have a better chance of understanding the topic of the conversation. Knowing the context can help a lot when you need to figure out harder-to-hear words.

3. Make sure they are facing you. Explain how you use their lips to help you hear. Tell them, "If I can't see you, I can't hear you." My family and I sometimes play [lipreading games](#) to help them understand how I use lipreading to hear. They can be a lot of fun

4. Keep background noise low and the lights bright. Ask them to turn down the music while you talk or to move away from the air conditioning unit to minimize competing sounds. Well-lit spaces also make it easier to lipread.

5. Teach them to take turns speaking. Children can be excited to speak and don't know to wait their turn, but it is probably difficult for you to hear more than one speaker at a time. Remind them to take turns speaking. This is good manners in any event, and will make it much easier for you to follow the conversation.

6. Ask them to speak at a normal volume and pace. Explain that normal speech is easier to lipread, while shouting or excessively slow speech is harder for you to understand. Clarity of the sounds is the key, so ask them to speak each word as clearly as they can rather than slurring them together. Sometimes asking them to pretend they are speaking to an audience or are onstage can help them understand what you mean.

7. If you miss something, ask for clarification. Rather than just saying "What?" or tuning out, ask them to rephrase or spell a difficult word (depending on their age). Or ask them to point to the object in question. Repeat the part of the sentence you heard and ask them to fill in the missing pieces. Say what you think you heard — sometimes the mishearings can be very funny if you let them be.

8. Get down to their level. Sit on the floor with them, or ask them to join you on your lap. Interact with their toys along with them. The more engaged you are with them in activities, the more willing they will be to make the extra effort to communicate.

9. Maintain a good energy level. Communication takes work, especially when you have hearing loss. Make sure you are well rested before a visit. Eat healthy foods, try to exercise regularly and be sure to get enough sleep. Don't be afraid to take breaks if your energy is lagging.

10. Keep your sense of humor. It can be frustrating, but remember the goal is to connect with your grandchildren, so why not laugh at the misunderstandings rather than being upset by them. Children are used to making mistakes and learning new words, and they will not judge you for your errors. If you are at ease with your hearing loss, they will be too.

Hearing loss can make communication difficult, but by following these tips and maintaining a healthy attitude, it does not have to stand in the way of meaningful and lasting relationships with your grandchildren. Don't let a single moment with them go to waste.



Diabetes, Hearing Loss & You

Hearing loss is "twice as common in people with diabetes as in those without" is the conclusion of the American Diabetes Association regarding the link between diabetes and hearing loss.

People with pre-diabetes are also affected: their rate of hearing loss is 30% higher than in those with normal blood sugar levels, reports the association.

Right now, we don't know how diabetes is related to hearing loss. It's possible that the high blood glucose levels associated with diabetes cause damage to the small blood vessels in the inner ear, similar to the way in which diabetes can damage the eyes and the kidneys. But more research needs to be done to discover why people with diabetes have a higher rate of hearing loss.

Many people suffer from both pathologies at the same time and it is still unclear what is the cause.

There are two main types of diabetes: **type 1**, which affects about 6% of diabetics, and **type 2**, which affects more than 90%. But whether it is one or the other, this chronic disease is characterized by the presence of excess sugar in the blood, hyperglycemia. In France, nearly 4 million people are affected.

Regarding hearing loss, the American Diabetes Association advises watching for a few signs, which are more often noticed by family members than by the affected person: frequently asking others to repeat themselves, having difficulty follow conversations involving more than two people or even need to increase the volume of the television or radio too loud. Since it can happen slowly, the symptoms of hearing loss can often be hard to notice.



A Message To Your GP.....

Hearings Aids DO Work!

The majority of hearing aids fitted to people with a hearing loss 'do work' provided they are worn regularly and they know how to manage them properly.

DO NOT be discouraged from having your hearing assessed by a qualified Audiologist if your GP mentions that hearing aids do not work! Accent Hearing have had many people come to the clinic over the years mentioning this, to which they have struggled for many years without having a reliable hearing assessment and then fitted with devices, changing their lives dramatically.



Hearing aids are called just that, 'aids' in aiding what residual hearing you have left, to which an increase in volume can improve your speech discrimination, i.e. relaying words back to the audiologist that you have just heard. At the assessment, if your speech discrimination is less than 100% in either ear, of say around 60-70%, then this is all the hearing device will give you, because your auditory system has been damaged beyond repair.

Research suggests that only a minority of suitable patients are being considered for hearing screening, with up to 85% of older patients reporting having received no spontaneous advice from their GP regarding hearing. Furthermore, data suggests that even patient-directed enquiries are sometimes dismissed by GPs. In a population-based cohort study in Australia, less than half of those seeking some form of help from their GP actually received referral for treatment or support services for their hearing loss. Reasons for this include time constraints, insufficient training regarding hearing screening and treatment, and the need for GPs to focus on more pressing medical issues.

That is why Accent Hearing is locally owned and the only independent hearing clinic with a Doctor of Audiology on staff in the Clarence Valley & New England areas. We do not work on 'sales commissions', 'cold call you from a call centre in another state', or 'coerce you into a flashy hearing clinic' at a shopping centre for free screens!

<https://bmccrimcare.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12875-020-01157-2>

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 Specialist). It is the 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 in assessments and effective rehabilitation programs over the last 10 years of practice.



Wax Problems?

Don't forget we have a micro-suction wax removal service available for impacted wax, the preferred method to guarantee safe and effective removal of ear wax, as well as other foreign bodies that may obstruct the ear canal (i.e. hearing aid domes).



Queen Street Clinic Update.....

Our new Clinic is still in the process of many renovations for it to become a commercialized and much safer 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.

@kelsey_aud

WHAT PEOPLE THINK AN AUDIOLOGIST DOES ALL DAY:



completes hearing test

WHAT AN AUDIOLOGIST ACTUALLY DOES ALL DAY:



identify, test & diagnose hearing loss/vestibular disorders
interpret test results of behavioral/objective measures
counsel patients about treatment & management
fit, dispense & repair of devices
programming & audiologic rehabilitation
cerumen management
provide education and prevention tips
and so much more!



Please note:

All clinics will be closed from 4:00pm Thursday 22 December and will re-open on Monday 16 January 2023 at 9:00am.

Please call in or ring for batteries now if you require them over the holidays.

All Staff at Accent Hearing wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year over the Festive Season.



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.