

## Head Office

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## Autumn Edition - 2023

Grafton - Glen Innes - Inverell

[www.accenthearing.com.au](http://www.accenthearing.com.au)

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

### WAX Removal Service Now In INVERELL

A new micro-suction wax removal service is now available in Inverell on a monthly basis. This 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 (i.e. hearing aid domes).



The advantage of getting an Audiologist to remove ear wax is that we examine many ear canals daily and are able to clearly identify and precisely locate the blockage, making it extremely safe.

A specially devised head-worn microscope (developed by Australian Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT) Surgeon Dr

John Vorrath) is used to carefully examine the ear. Upon identifying the location and extent of wax or foreign body within the canal, our doctor of Audiology uses a fine, low-pressure suction device to safely remove the blockage. Unlike ear syringing or ear irrigation, where ear wax is flushed out without a view of the canal, during micro-suction, the canal and the ear wax are being directly viewed with the microscope and removed. This significantly reduces the potential for perforation of the ear drum or mastoid cavity and improves comfort avoiding any complications that may arise from traditional ear irrigation.

### Appointments

Appointments will be available from late February 2023 from Inverell Hospital Community Health. 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 wax softener before your appointment, preferable in a spray bottle.**



### Hearing loss remains the highest modifiable risk factor in new Lancet report!



The 2020 Lancet Commission on dementia prevention, intervention and care has been published. They identified 12 risk factors that, if modified, might prevent or delay up to 40% of dementias. Outlined here are 9 recommendations to countries to be addressed by policy makers and individuals to reduce the cases of dementia:

- \* Aim to maintain systolic blood pressure of 130 mm Hg or less in midlife.
- \* Encourage use of hearing aids for hearing loss and reduce hearing loss by protecting ears from high noise levels.
- \* Reduce exposure to air pollution and second-hand tobacco smoke.
- \* Prevent head injury.
- \* Prevent alcohol misuse.
- \* Stop smoking uptake and stop smoking.
- \* Provide all children with primary and secondary education.
- \* Lead an active life into mid, and possibly later life.
- \* Reduce obesity and diabetes.

# Reducing Noise in Restaurants: Feasibility and Recommendations

Nudelman, Charles J. MS, CCC-SLP; D’Orazio, Dario PhD; Bottalico, Pasquale PhD

A recent study investigated the negative effects of loud background noise in restaurants for adults over the age of 60. The researchers simulated a restaurant in a sound booth with 31 older adults with varying levels of hearing loss. They found that in certain levels of background noise, the speakers raised their voices, reported increased communication disturbances, and described less willingness to spend time and money in the restaurant. These negative outcomes occurred due to a cycle of bothersome noise generated by **the Lombard effect, which is the unconscious tendency to increase one’s voice in a noisy environment.**

In restaurants, patrons act as sources and receivers of noise, which results in a noisy environment that is challenging to manage. The researchers concluded with two main findings: 1) that the negative cycle of the Lombard effect is reduced when background noise is less than 60 dB(A), and 2) that restaurant owners should try to keep their background noise levels between 50-55 dB(A) to be inclusive of older adults with hearing loss, allowing them to understand the speech of their dining partners.

Given the fact that restaurants have a variety of noise sources (e.g., kitchen noise, background music, patrons’ conversations, etc.), it is difficult to achieve background noise between 50-55 dB(A). Yet, background noise in restaurants is a well-documented problem and has been rated the most irritating component of dining out.

Here, we offer feasible solutions for restaurant owners to reduce disturbing background noise and improve the dining experience of restaurant goers, both old and young. The negative cycle of noise in restaurants can be eliminated when the level of the background noise remains below 60 dB(A).



**There are three main avenues to achieve this level of noise: acoustical capacity, absorbent materials, and screens.** One answer to the complex problem of noise in restaurants is sound treatment. Some Michelin-starred restaurants are among the eating establishments with the lowest background noise levels, as their design-process considered the acoustic experiences of their patrons, resulting in easily intelligible conversations and customers who are willing to spend long periods at the dining table. Acoustic consultants contributed to the design of these top-tier eateries, but they are also available to support any restaurant owner with a desire to facilitate positive dining experiences in their space. It is commonly said that “time is money” and, even more importantly, “health is wealth.” With the proper sound treatment, why not have both?

Loud restaurant noise can be a barrier to communication and enjoyment of a dining experience and might increase the risk for adverse health effects among patrons and employees. In addition to adversely affecting the subjective quality of the dining experience, environments that require a person to raise their voice to be understood an arm’s length distance suggest an ambient sound level sufficient to create a risk for noise-induced hearing loss.

Encouraging restaurant managers to take steps towards noise reduction and proper lighting to facilitate lip reading can also create an environment for enhanced communication with servers and fellow diners. Reducing restaurant noise levels can help maintain an enjoyable environment and reduce the health risks for employees and patrons.

Nudelman, Charles J. MS, CCC-SLP; D’Orazio, Dario PhD; Bottalico, Pasquale PhD. Reducing Noise in Restaurants: Feasibility and Recommendations. *The Hearing Journal* 76(02):p 6,7, February 2023. | DOI: 10.1097/01.HJ.0000919792.64838.c1

## Cotton Buds & Ear Candles are a big No No!



Doctor's advice hasn't changed very much over the years in that 'you' should not stick anything in your ears smaller than your elbow! Cotton buds, hair pins, house keys and toothpicks are all 'smaller-than-our-elbow', however we love to put them in our ears because it feels good! These can cause cuts or abrasions in our ear canals, making them bleed, or could even perforate our eardrums and dislocate our hearing bones. Any of these things could lead to hearing loss, dizziness, ringing (tinnitus) or other symptoms of ear injury.

Instead, most people can just let nature do its job. Our bodies produce earwax to keep our ears lubricated, clean and protected. Dirt, dust and anything else that might enter our ears gets stuck to the wax, which keeps any such particles from moving farther into the ear canal.

Our usual jaw motions from talking and chewing, along with skin growth within the canal, typically helps move old earwax from inside to the outside the ear, where it is washed off during bathing

For those with impacted ear wax, the use of cotton-tipped swabs may push the earwax deeper into the ear canal and harm the eardrum.

**Do not use ear candles either! Just because a Chemist sells them, it doesn't mean they are safe to use.** Not only can they cause serious damage to your eardrum, there is no scientific evidence that they remove impacted cerumen (even if you've read they were used in Ancient Egypt). They can actually give you a hearing loss by producing a wax covering over the ear drum.

Every one has good and bad bacteria all over their body, including the ears. By prodding and poking around in the ear canal, you are actually upsetting the usual mechanisms in place and actually removing the 'good bugs' in your ears, leaving the 'bad ones'. This is mostly why your ears will become itchy! You need to refrain from prodding inside the ear canal and perhaps just using your fingers by pushing the tragus part of the ear (see picture above) up and down to reduce the itching.

The best way to remove wax plugs from your ears that has not come out by the usual way nature intended it to come out, is to use an over-the-counter wax-softening spray a few days before seeing your GP, Medical Clinic's Nurse to have a 'wax flush' or have it micro-suctioned at Accent Hearing (Grafton & Inverell). Many GPs are not carrying out ear flushing anymore due to the danger of piecing the ear drum and compensation insurance.



In softening the hard build-up of wax in the ear canal first, this will make it much easier to come out of the ear canal when the warm water is used to flush it or

micro-suctioned out. You may have to see an Ear Nose & Throat Specialist (ENT), if wax is very impacted through using cotton buds! Portable cheap wax flushing systems bought from the Chemist or over the internet are not advisable either.

Just like your eyes, you only have two of them, so you need to look after your ears also, as once they are damaged, you may lose some of your hearing, sometimes altogether!

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## 5 Fun Facts for Hearing

- Ears not only help you hear, but also aid in balance.
- Snakes hear through the jaw bone and through a traditional inner ear. In essence, snakes have two distinct hearing mechanisms, which helps them hear and catch prey.
- Sitting in front of the speakers at a rock concert can expose you to 120 decibels, which will begin to damage hearing in only 7 1/2 minutes.
- Thirty-seven percent of children with only minimal hearing loss fail at least one grade.
- Male mosquitoes hear with thousands of tiny hairs growing on their antennae (see below).



## Are you a Government Pensioner?



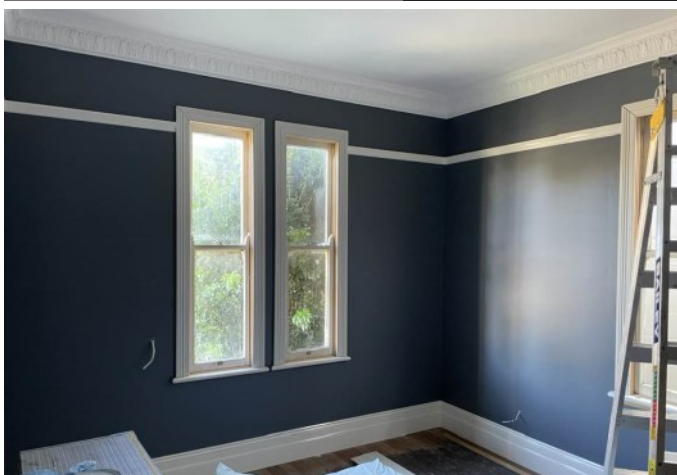
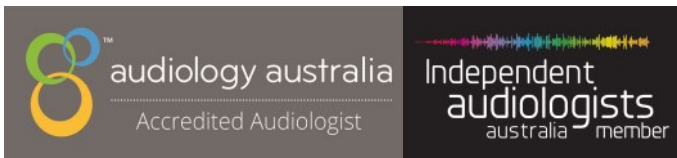
Australian Government  
Department of Health

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 GPs or ENTs (Ear Nose & Throat Specialists). 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 11 years of practice.



### Queen Street Clinic Update.....

Our new Clinic is still in the process of many renovations for it to become a commercialised 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. Here are some photos of the freshly painted testing room, our sheltie Mr. Vinsky as our renovation's inspector and the new wheel chair ramp.



### 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.*