



**Accent Hearing**  
EXCELLENCE IN LISTENING



# The Listener



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## Winter Edition - 2024

Grafton - Glen Innes - Inverell

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

Welcome to the Winter 2024 edition of Accent Hearing's Newsletter *The Listener*.

## Master Lipreading to Unlock Silent Conversations.

**Read Our Lips Australia** is a self-paced online learning platform that is dedicated to supporting those with hearing loss and their families, by improving their quality of life through increased communication skills.



The Read Our Lips Australia course focuses on teaching users the most visible movements of the mouth, jaw, teeth and tongue. This is an important part of becoming a good lipreader.

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

SEE SPEECH, HEAR IT, FEEL CONNECTED.

This course is perfect for absolute beginners, but it's also great for those who have lipreading experience, who are looking to either refresh or add to their lipreading skills. You can access a free preview of Read Our Lips Australia online lipreading course to see what it is all about. **For more information and frequently asked questions go to <https://www.readourlips.com.au>**

## Leaf-blower NOISE !

A team of engineering students at Johns Hopkins University has invented a kind of silencer attachment to radically reduce noise, which could be on shelves in a few years from Black & Decker. The team's design ended up taking the form of an attachment that fits over the end and dampens the specific frequencies blasted out by leaf blowers, without reducing the force of the air. They compare it to a silencer for a gun, or a muffler for a car, making it up to nearly 40% quieter. The researchers started by analyzing the sounds leaf blowers made, and how they make them. It turns out, among the cacophony that these tools emit are some high frequency noises that are particularly annoying to the human brain.



## Old Stories & Myths!

If our Audiologist had a dollar for every story heard from clients, about their parent's hearing aids, he'd be quite rich now! Here's some old myths we can put to bed!

### My hearing loss isn't bad enough for hearing aids

Hearing loss can occur at any time and slowly impacts the way you interact with the world. Often, it's family and friends who notice and get frustrated first. Over time, this can significantly impact mental wellbeing and lead to withdrawal from social settings, difficulties communicating and loss of confidence. Early intervention is key, even with mild hearing loss, to protect your residual hearing long term.

### Hearing aids are only for 'old' people

Just like changes to your eyesight, hearing loss can occur at any age, at any time – it is not a condition faced only by the elderly.

### Hearing aids are too hard to use

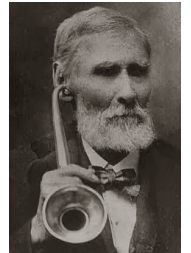
Following your initial fitting, it can take a little time and persistence for your brain to adjust to using your new hearing aids and for long term use.

### Hearing aids are bulky and ugly

Hearing aids have undergone quite the transformation in recent years to make them sleeker, more stylish and adaptable to everyday life. There is a huge range of options to suit users of different ages and lifestyles, from those who are on the go for work and play to those who live a more measured, quieter life.

### It's fine to wait to address hearing loss

The longer you wait in addressing your hearing loss, the harder it can be to improve your hearing. When you experience issues, your brain's ability to recognise sound decreases. Hearing aids can help retrain your brain to recognise sound in a different way, but the longer you wait to give your brain this assistance, the longer it will take for it to adjust. That's why nipping hearing loss in the bud by utilising the power of hearing aids early on is best. **Don't wait till your 70+ years old!**



# A New Definition of Noise

The new definition of noise has three important implications: 1) Noise causes hearing loss in the public, not just in workers with occupational exposure. Wanted noise, whether from a rock concert or use of power tools, can cause auditory damage. 2) Unwanted noise is stressful, and stress is bad for human health. 3) Noise pollution, largely from transportation noise, is generally accepted as part of modern life in industrialized societies, but it harms our health. Transportation noise causes increased cardiovascular disease and death. A full discussion of these adverse health effects is beyond the scope of this excerpt, but exposure to transportation noise activates involuntary physiological stress responses, causing increases in blood pressure and heart rate, increases in stress hormone levels, and inflammation of the arterial lining. Despite thinking that we are used to the hum of road traffic outside our homes and schools and workplaces, and in many locations noise from trains or airplanes, we don't habituate to these involuntary physiological responses, which lead to increased cardiovascular disease and death. The physiological impacts on each individual may be small, but when more than 100 million Americans are exposed to transportation noise, the population health impacts are large.

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## Ideas that can help communication with those with hearing loss

1. **Always face a hard of hearing person.** Make eye contact and keep it while you are talking. Try not to look away or cover your mouth as many deaf people rely on lip reading to help them understand you.
2. **Check noise and lighting.** Turn off or move away from background noise. Make sure your face is not in shadow and there are no strong lights or sunshine in their eyes.
3. **Keep your distance.** Stand approximately a meter away from the deaf person. This is important for hearing-aid users, lip-readers and signers.
4. **Speak clearly, slowly and steadily.** Don't mumble, shout or exaggerate – it distorts your lip patterns.
5. **Take turns.** If there is more than one person in a conversation take turns to talk.
6. **Repeat and re-phrase if necessary.** Trying to say the same thing in a different way might help.
7. **Write it down.** Don't be afraid to write or draw to help understand.
8. **Get the person's attention.** Before you speak to them, make sure they are concentrating on listening to what you have to say and don't walk away when speaking!

## The Secret's Out - You don't have to wear big hearing aids anymore!



If you happen to have a mild sloping to severe hearing loss, hearing aids have become much more discreet over the years and are hardly noticeable these days. So forget about all those stories you've either heard or have seen in the past about your friends, parents or grandparents hearing aids and join the future! Hearing devices are not that hard to operate also now, with the option of using your mobile phone to connect to the hearing devices to which you can use a remote control.

**Why not enquire and improve your lifestyle soon!**

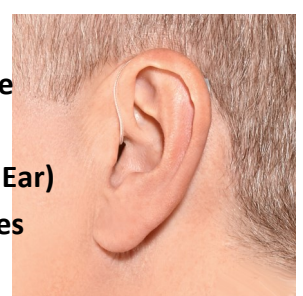
An Ear Trumpet from the 1800's

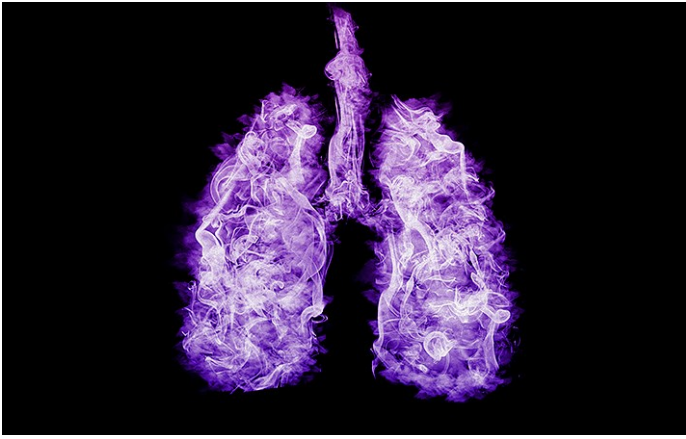


A BTE (Behind The Ear) from the 1980's



Today's Range of RITE's (Receiver In The Ear) Hearing Devices





## Children and smoking, vaping and tobacco!

Children and young people exposed to second-hand smoke and vapour from e-cigarettes, also known as vapes, are at greater risk of serious health and development problems. There is no safe amount of smoking or vaping around children. The best way to protect them is to keep their surroundings as smoke and vape-free as possible. Just like with cigarettes, babies and infants exposed to vaping can inhale or ingest second-hand and third-hand vaping of harmful chemicals and toxins.

### How smoking affects children...

Children breathe faster than adults and inhale more chemicals when exposed to second-hand smoke. They are at greater risk of:

- **middle ear infections which can cause temporary hearing impairment and in severe cases, the damage can be permanent.**
- **asthma** – passive smoking increases both the risk of developing asthma and the symptoms.
- **behavioural problems** – including ADHD.
- **poor lung development** – children's lungs are still developing and the increased levels of carbon monoxide from second-hand smoke aggravates allergies and increases the risk of respiratory illness.
- **sudden infant death syndrome** – the risk of SIDS is double for children exposed to second-hand smoke.
- **school absences** – missing school through health issues can result in gaps in their learning.

### What you can do...

The best thing you can do for your children is to quit smoking and vaping. This immediately reduces their exposure to second-hand smoke and vapour from e-cigarettes. **You can also:**

- make your house and car smoke and vape-free areas.
- make sure people who care for your children don't smoke or vape around them.
- teach your children to stay away from second-hand smoke and vapour.

From the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care.

## Sing Play Music Therapy in Grafton!

"Are you wondering what Kathy is doing now you don't see her on the front desk?"

Behind the scenes Kathy continues to make sure Accent Hearing is running smoothly, but Kathy also operates a music therapy practice in the heart of Grafton.

Kathy has been a registered music therapist for over 24 years providing music therapy programs for children and families with all kinds of special needs.



Music therapy is another allied health profession (like Audiology) that helps all ages and abilities to reach therapy goals using the universal tool of music. The National Disability Insurance Scheme recognises music therapy and people with an NDIS plan can utilize music therapy to help reach their goals.

Kathy utilizes the power of music to help people overcome various challenges. She designs tailored therapeutic sessions, harnessing the power of rhythm, melody, and harmony to promote growth, development, and healing. Music is a powerful tool that aids in the development of children's brains, self-expression, focus and concentration, social skills, and language skills. Here is a concise list of the benefits of music for children aged 0-10:

### Brain Development:

Music is No. 1 for brain development in children as it stimulates all areas of the brain and can enhance cognitive skills, i.e. memory, attention, and problem-solving.

### Self-Expression:

Music provides children with a means to express themselves. It encourages creativity allowing children to communicate their feelings and ideas in a non-verbal way.

### Focus and Concentration:

Listening to music can improve a child's focus and concentration. This is particularly beneficial in an age where children are constantly bombarded with information and distractions.

### Social Skills:

Music is a great way to teach children about turn-taking and sharing. It can also enhance their social skills by providing a common ground for interaction with peers.

### Language Skills:

Music can help children develop their language skills. This is because music involves listening, speaking, and reading, which are all integral to language development.

### Overall Fun:

Last but not least, music is fun! It's a great way to engage children and can be a source of entertainment and enjoyment for the whole family. **Why not call Kathy on 0432 804 615 to book a Grandchild in.**

# What is Eustachian Tube Dysfunction?

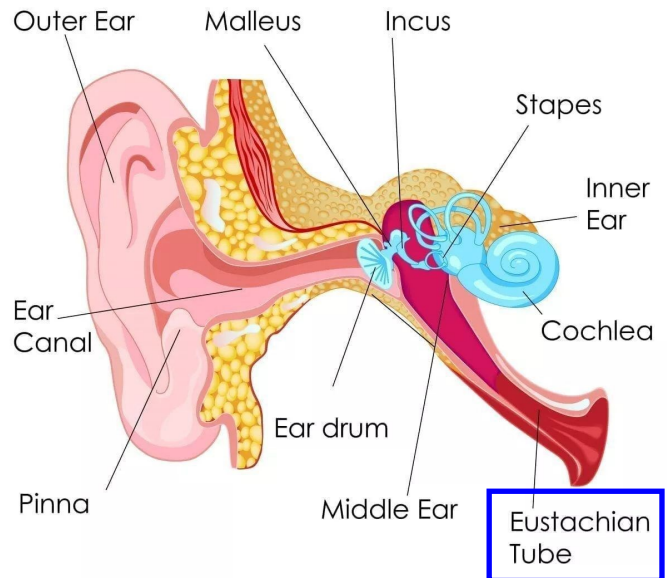


The **Eustachian tube** is an opening that connects the middle ear with the nasal-sinus cavity. This tube helps to balance pressure in the middle ear (commonly felt as your ears popping), drain fluid from the middle ear and protect the ear from both hearing sounds your body causes and nasal drainage. The Eustachian tube contains a valve that opens and closes. Inadequate opening of this tube can cause a buildup of fluid in the ears, which can lead to a feeling of pain and pressure in the ear. A tube that is too open can also cause a persistent feeling of pressure as well as hearing unusual sounds such as your own breathing or your own voice too loudly. **Eustachian tube disorders are common and one of the leading causes of ear infections (otitis media).**

**Patulous Eustachian Tube Dysfunction**—is a disorder of the valve of the Eustachian tube that causes it to remain open. When this valve remains open, sound can travel from the nasal-sinus cavity to the ears, allowing you to hear your own voice or your own breathing too loudly, or even the sound of blood pumping.

Your doctor or audiologist may use a variety of techniques to diagnose patulous Eustachian tube dysfunction while viewing your ear drum (tympanic membrane). Your doctor may ask you to breathe deeply and swallow to see how the ear drum responds. They may also measure the pressure inside your ear using a Tympanometer. Medical treatment for patulous Eustachian tube dysfunction includes limiting decongestants and caffeine, and drinking more water. Surgery might be recommended.

**Obstructive Eustachian Tube Dysfunction**—occurs when the valve of the Eustachian tube does not open properly. This prevents pressure from balancing and fluids from draining out of the ear. Over time, negative pressure can build up in the ear, causing pain, ear fullness and muffled hearing. When this occurs, sometimes your doctor can see the ear drum change shape due to this pressure and become concave.



Obstructive eustachian tube dysfunction can be chronic, intermittent or short term. When it is only felt during airplane flights or SCUBA diving, this is known as baro-challenge-induced Eustachian tube dysfunction. A common course of treatment for Eustachian tube dysfunction is the use of decongestants or antihistamines. In some cases, this treatment may make the condition worse. If decongestants or antihistamines do not provide relief, contact your doctor. You may need to see an ear, nose and throat specialist for treatment.

From John Hopkins Medicine.



## Accent Hearing Clinics - 1300 859 828

- **GRAFTON** | 23 Queen Street, 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 a University trained Doctor of Audiology; a fully Accredited Member of Audiology Australia; Vice President of Independent Audiologists Australia; and a qualified Medicare Hearing Services Provider.*