



The Listener

Accent Hearing

EXCELLENCE IN LISTENING



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Summer Edition - 2024-2025

Grafton - Glen Innes - Inverell

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Welcome to the Summer 2024/25 edition of Accent Hearing's Newsletter *The Listener*.

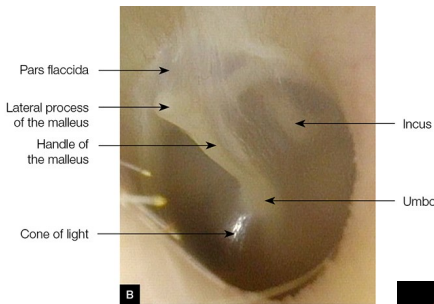
The Pitfalls Of Ear Flushing

(Which Can Cause Otitis Externa & TM Perforation)

It's a clinician's role to avoid harm to their patients and to take the utmost care in all clinical procedures. However, complications from ear syringing are an increasingly common reason for presentation to ear, nose and throat (ENT) specialists and medico-legal complaints against GPs.

Flushing the ear canal with water can produce **Fungal Otitis Externa**. Bacteria and fungi love moisture. With ear irrigation, we're giving them a pool party and encouraging the microbial spread. This is an absolute contraindication to irrigation. With **Foreign Bodies**, ear irrigation may work for these, but there's a risk of pushing objects further down the ear canal when they could have been removed in less than 10 seconds with the right tools and technique. **Traumatic Events For Children**. It can take up to 15 minutes and still might not get the job done. To a child this can be traumatizing.

The pitfalls of syringing are possible damage to the delicate skin of the ear canal and the tympanic membrane itself (rupture). **Also the irritation to nerves can sometimes lead to severe, but temporary side effects, such as dizziness, pain or loss of hearing.**



A very healthy Ear Drum or Tympanic Membrane (Left).

A ruptured Ear Drum or Tympanic Membrane (Right).



The Advantages Of Micro-Suction



At Accent Hearing, we believe micro-suction of ear wax and other debris is the safest course of action, due to the quick and effective use of a very fine suction hose. It does not take a long time either as long as you've used a wax softener at least 3-4 nights prior to your appointment.

Study finds link between hearing loss and Parkinson's disease in Veterans

Parkinson's disease affects over one million Americans and disproportionately impacts Veterans. Researchers took advantage of the unique medical record system at the Department of Veterans Affairs to explore possible links between the disease and hearing loss.

The study examined 7,296,051 US Veterans with an audiogram between January 1, 1999 and December 30, 2022. Results showed that those with hearing loss have a much higher risk of developing PD later in life. Research also showed that those who have the worst hearing loss seemed to have the highest risk of developing PD.

The study also looked at any link between the use of hearing aids and lowering the risk of developing PD. Researchers found that as long as people got a hearing aid within two years of having an abnormal hearing test, their risk of developing PD later in life was lowered substantially. Therefore, widespread screening for hearing loss and appropriate use of hearing aids may reduce the incidence of PD. Additional studies are needed to examine potential underlying mechanisms in the association between hearing loss and PD.

AMA Neurol. Published online October 21, 2024. doi:10.1001/jamaneurol.2024.3568

Microphones, Meetings & Managers!

What people should be using at meetings!



How many times have you gone to a meeting and you've had trouble hearing the speaker up the front, or an audience member asking a question? It can be so frustrating for someone with a hearing loss and even for someone without a hearing loss.

You attend meetings to go and hear the latest on a topic, or what's happening at your local Rotary, Lions, Probus Club or Church group etc, however if you can't hear different speakers, then what's the point of going? People sometimes leave organisations altogether because it has been very difficult, due to the Manager, President, Secretary etc, not taking the initiative and using a microphone during a meeting. This is so easily fixed!

It's no good shouting out "You can all hear me, right?" And when no one has the nerve to say "no," the speaker goes on to shout their speech. Or, they take the microphone and hold it down by their belly button, where it can't pick up any sound, or move away from it if on a stand. These instances show disrespect for your audience; if your audience can't hear you, they can't be moved to action. By using a microphone, it's a powerful way to fill the room with your message and get your voice heard. Don't be shy in asking your leader to set up a microphone in the room, it is not rude to ask, it is a necessity, as you can guarantee, you won't be the only one having trouble hearing. Using it correctly can make the difference between sounding like a professional and sounding like an amateur.

Here are a few tips on using a microphone effectively at your meetings:

- 1. Always be willing to use a microphone.** In any audience, you will have varying hearing levels and English levels; don't make it hard for people to listen to you. It's healthier for your voice – and more pleasant for your audience's ears – if you don't have to yell.
- 2. Hearing Impaired.** For those who have hearing loss and wear hearing devices, using a microphone will make the meeting much more pleasant and enjoyable for them, even for those who have a hearing loss and don't wear any assisted listening devices.
- 3. If you are making comments during a conference,** stand up and use a mic to ensure that everyone can hear you. Or pass the microphone to the person asking the question. Wireless handheld mics work best for this.
- 4. Speak with a strong, clear voice.** Don't try to yell and don't assume that it's OK to whisper. The microphone amplifies the voice itself; make sure it's amplifying a strong, confident voice.
- 5. For a hand-held microphone,** hold the mic about 6-8 inches from your face, just under your mouth. When your head moves, move your hand with it so that your mic follows your mouth. Use your free hand to make hand gestures.
- 6. Check the battery and volume in advance.** There might not be a sound technician available to help you, however, always check the battery and volume level before you start the meeting. You can say something like, "Testing, testing" or "Check 1. Check 2." instead of "Hey, is this thing on?"
- 7. Cough AWAY from the mic.** Sometimes we have to cough or sneeze whilst speaking, however, remember to turn away from the mic, otherwise the entire room will resonate with your booming sneeze.
- 8. Rather than be intimidated,** look at the mic as an opportunity to amplify your message. Remind yourself **why** your speech subject is important to you, and use that energy and enthusiasm to fuel your passion when speaking. The mic is there to make your job easier.



Hearing Loss Can Lead to Social Isolation and Loneliness from Communication Loss and Disconnection....



When it comes to tackling hearing loss, it is increasingly clear that rehabilitation is a team sport. Those supported through their hearing care journey by family or friends have been found to experience better results from devices like hearing aids, than patients who are isolated and lack support.

At Accent Hearing, we encourage our clients to bring a family member or friend and to invite them beforehand via phone, email or text to attend and be actively involved. We've found that an invitation is received better beforehand, rather than as an afterthought on arrival and may reduce interjecting and interrupting if they have prepared questions. When invited beforehand, relatives feel they are valued and to ensure the relative does not sit in the waiting room during the consult, but goes in. This way we can ask the clients to tell their hearing story, then ask the relative or friend for their view to help incorporating all in the rehabilitation planning.

It's important to involve family because the number two predictor of morbidity and mortality is lack of social contact.

Once family know how to help, they're willing to do it. Because family care, they will do what they can to help their relative or friend, and evidence is very strong that family involvement improves outcomes. If family is involved, the person with hearing loss is more likely to seek help with any hearing loss.



Have you weighed yourself lately?

This is a question often asked by family members to check your own weight to see if it's in the healthy weight range and what you may need to do to get it back to that safe level. It only takes a few minutes to find the scales hiding in a cupboard or the like, but once you stand on them and know your body weight, you can do something about it if required. **This health safety check is very similar to finding out about any hearing loss you may have acquired over the years, however not many take this as seriously.**



Because hearing loss is a 'silent killer' in the way it degenerates over the years with some people, you really need to find out what's going on, now that you require the TV volume to be up louder; you are missing parts of words in normal conversation; you can't hear the grandchildren; someone knocking at the door or the telephone isn't as clear anymore. This will definitely drive the family up the wall, with them having to repeat what's just been asked or spoken...*several times*. This gets very frustrating for partners or family members, as the person with the hearing loss doesn't always feel that they have hearing loss UNTIL BEING FULLY ASSESSED. Some family members end up not speaking to the person with the hearing loss as frequently, as they can't be bothered saying something 3 times or



more. Why not have your hearing checked regularly and stop putting others in constant frustration. Once you find out if you have a hearing loss and do something about it, you'll find your life will have changed for the better! Don't wait until your GP says it's TMB (too many Birthdays) to do something about it and also your GP doesn't pick up everything at appointments. No referral necessary!



Don't forget hearing aid bags are available?

Accent Hearing has designed a special zip-up bag to place your hearing aids in for any hospital visits, or just for the caravan for easy identification. **This helps prevent losing your hearing aids** and also a place to keep batteries and cleaning kit in. The bags are available for sale at \$20.00 each. Please ask at reception.



Did you know....

The body has a complex collection of functions that help us maintain balance, hearing, sight and spatial orientation, postural sway, vestibular function and proprioception, which is the awareness of the body in space. If one starts to fall, the body can usually compensate to keep from falling. However, most hearing researchers would agree that if two or more functions are damaged, falls will increase.

Tinnitus Connection with Seafood!



1. Diet and Tinnitus Risk: Regular seafood consumption, particularly tuna, light-meat fish, and shellfish, is associated with a lower risk of developing persistent tinnitus.

2. Type of Seafood Matters: While light-meat fish and shellfish reduced tinnitus risk, consuming dark-meat fish and fish oil supplements is linked to a potentially higher risk.

3. Preventive Insight: Findings suggest considering your diet in patient discussions to support overall auditory and age-related health.

The Hearing Review - Oct 29, 2024. How Seafood in Diet Affects Tinnitus Risk: An Interview with Sharon Curhan, MD, ScM.



Hearing Impaired Badges

To wear so people know to speak clearly to you when you're out and about.

Please enquire at reception. Cost is \$5:00.



Please note:

All clinics will be closed from 3:00pm Friday 20 December and will re-open at 23 Queen St on Monday 13 January 2025.

Business Hours for 2025:

9:00am to 4:00pm Monday - Thursday
9:00am to 3:00pm Friday

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** | 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.