



Ask Your Audiologist

Q. *I have heard that hearing loss can cause dementia. Any truth to that?*

A. It is so good that there is a touch of skepticism in your question. You've obviously seen the recent ads in the newspaper implying that you should be worried.

Here's the straight story. There have been recent publications in medical and audiology journals indicating there is an *association* between dementia and hearing loss. The research suggests that dementia is more commonly found among those with hearing loss than the general population. It does not say that hearing loss causes dementia. The authors of the studies suggest possible explanations. One possibility is that untreated

hearing loss makes communication more difficult. As the difficulty increases, a person is less likely to engage in social interactions. Social isolation is believed to contribute to the progression of dementia.

Another possible explanation is that the brain has limited resources which are already being taxed by dementia. Hearing loss would further tax those resources as the brain attempts to decipher a partially heard message. The combination of the two conditions may hasten the dementia. The research found less dementia among those hearing impaired individuals who wore hearing aids. It does not say that hearing aids prevent dementia but this is a very positive finding which suggests helping people hear better may delay or slow the progression of dementia.

Clearly, more research is needed to explain the association of dementia and hearing loss. The clinical picture for the audiologist really remains unchanged. It is important to periodically monitor hearing. When hearing loss reaches a point that it interferes with routine communication, some type of assistance is needed and most often it involves hearing aids. Those with early dementia tend to accept hearing aids more readily than those with more advanced dementia. Surveys of benefit with the hearing aids we fit indicate 95% of patients report improvement in quality of life.

Running, Wining and Hearing (Part 2)

Guest Column by Jessica Tecca

In the fall issue of the Hearing Services & Systems newsletter, I wrote a column about an annual trip my dad (Dr. Tecca) and I take to the Leelanau Peninsula for the Harvest Stompede. I described how we run through vineyards, taste wine, and chat with interesting people. The gist of the story was that it's our senses, not the least of which being hearing, which allow us to thoroughly enjoy this weekend. Right around the time that issue was published, we headed north for this year's event.



Before I share the story, I'd like to air a grievance. In the last column, I asked that when you were in, you ask my dad to carry me up the mile long hill, so I didn't have to run it and wind up doubled over seeing my life flash before my eyes. He didn't, which leads me to wonder whether you did in fact suggest it. I lived, so it's forgiven, but next year, please help me out!

The race was hard as usual, but beautiful, and we really enjoyed our weekend. And like in year's past, we met plenty of characters, and tasted, saw, and heard lots of great things. Two of our encounters ran the gamut: a serenade and a gunshot.

At one of the wineries, the gentleman pouring our wine was retired and working at the tasting room just to enjoy the friendly faces and conversation. Oh, and to keep himself out of trouble. He loved the idea that we were visiting on a father-daughter trip... so much that he poured all three of us a glass of champagne and serenaded us to celebrate. And he had a beautiful voice! This is the first and only time I've been *serenaded* in all my 27 years, so I'm really glad I was able to hear it well.

At another winery, as we walked up a hill toward the tasting room, we heard a loud crack. And then a second loud crack. And then we heard a woman inside the tasting room say "It's ok, just don't make eye contact with him." This was all a little unsettling, clearly, but we'd been here before and knew that the vintner was a friendly, easy going guy who plays Jimmy Buffett music in his shop, so we decided it was probably ok to proceed. It turns out that birds had been eating grapes from the vineyard, and the vintner had gotten angry and was shooting at them to scare them away. You might be thinking that you'd prefer not to hear gunshots on a leisurely day of wine tasting. That would be very understandable, but remember, you can always take your hearing aids out if you hear something you don't like!

Here's to another great father-daughter weekend and another set of phenomenal memories. This is one of many experiences we were able to fully enjoy because we could hear the world around us clearly. We know you have many great experiences too, and we'd love to hear them! Please visit the Hearing Services and Systems Facebook page and post them on the wall for everyone to enjoy!

New Products Update

This fall we began working with 2 new products that may interest you. The first is Nano, an itty bitty teeny weeny hearing aid (sorry no yellow polka dots). The second, H2O, is a water resistant product we've been waiting on forever it seems. A brief description of each follows.

Nano represents a new class of hearing aids called MIC (microphone in canal). It is similar to the product pictured in our last newsletter that places the entire hearing aid within the ear canal. The obvious advantage of this product is cosmetic. It can not be seen unless you look directly into the ear canal. It is also more sheltered from wind and rain. Nano is a custom product that is made from an impression of the ear like other in the ear hearing aids. It does not require a special deep ear impression and it is not intended for extended wear. It is

suitable for hearing loss in the mild to moderate range. You must have very good dexterity to handle Nano and its very small battery. It is not a good choice if you have severe arthritis or loss of sensitivity in your fingers. Sound quality is very good. Price ranges from \$2400 to \$2900 depending on the processor in the hearing aid.

H2O, as you might guess, refers to water or in this case water resistance. We've been waiting on this for a long, long time. We've had very good moisture resistant hearing aids for about 3 years but the bar has just been raised. The H2O has an Ingress Protection rating of 67. This means it is dust tight for 8 hours in a dust chamber and liquid resistant with temporary immersion at a depth of 3 feet for 30 minutes. Not quite water proof but really good! The Phonak Cassia, Solana and Ambra product lines are all available in the H2O case for the same price as the standard case \$1700 to \$2700.

Did you hear the story about the dumb audiologist...?

I was evaluating the new Phonak Nano hearing aids. They are very small and a little tricky to get in my ears. I was alternating between my behind the ear (BTE) aids and the Nano to compare benefits and limitations. I removed my right BTE while I took a phone call. After the call I decided to switch back to the Nano. The right Nano slipped in my ear easily. The left Nano didn't seat properly. I tried again but it kept twisting and my ear was starting to hurt. OK, switch back to the BTEs. I put my right aid on no problem but couldn't find my left aid. OK, here comes the dumb audiologist part. I had never taken the left aid out of my ear. You can't fit 2 hearing aids in the same ear at the same time. It really does require good dexterity to handle these tiny hearing aids but a little common sense goes a long way. The real story is it's best to avoid removing your hearing aid to use the telephone and don't try to wear two aids on the same ear! You should not have to remove the Nano to use the phone.



HEARING SERVICES ON THE INTERNET!

You are probably aware by now that we have a great web site, www.hearingservicesandsystems.com. Our newsletters are added to the website 4 times per year. You will find a newsletter tab with the last 2 years archived for your continued reading enjoyment or to easily share. Would you prefer to have your newsletter delivered electronically rather than standard mail? Just let us know your email address and we'll take care of the rest. You can call us at 269-324-0555 or email hearingserv@sbcglobal.net. Look for us on Facebook! We will be able to make regular updates on this site so we can quickly share information about hearing loss and hearing aids.

HEARING SERVICES PREMIUM MERCURY-FREE BATTERIES

*Sale Price: \$3.00 per package (4 batteries).
\$25.00 per carton (10 packages = 40 batteries)
Offer Expires January 31, 2012.*

M _____

Address _____

Size 13 Size 312 Size 10/230 Size 675

1			
2	Number of packages:		
3	Amount:		
4	Shipping & Handling:		\$2.00
5	TOTAL		
6			
7	<i>Bill my credit card:</i>		
8	<input type="checkbox"/> Visa <input type="checkbox"/> MasterCard <input type="checkbox"/> Discover		
9	Card Number:		
10	Card Expiration Date:		
11			
12	Signature:		

Mail check and make payable to:

Hearing Services & Systems
576 Romence Ste. 121, Portage, MI 49024

Chocolate Technology Chat

Thursday
January 19, 2012
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Topics:

- 1:00 p.m. Styles of hearing aid – Nano to BigO!
What's size hearing aid is right for me?
- 2:00 p.m. Wireless technology – You can get the TV
sound into my hearing aid how?
- 3:00 p.m. Moisture resistant products - Can I swim
with the sharks with the new hearing aids?
- 4:00 p.m. Loop technology – Get loopy with us! Will
my aids work with hearing loop systems?

Join us for delicious chocolates while we discuss new hearing aid technology on a cold winter's day.

We'll have mouth watering candy (including sugar-free choices) from Chocolatea, hot coffee from Water Street and information from us!

We've written about many new devices over the last year. Now is your chance to see them up close and ask us all your questions.

We'll be having a mini-presentation on the hour by Drs. Tecca and Deiters and informal conversation in between.