



Heard in Fort Worth

Newsletter of the Hearing Loss Association of Fort Worth

January, 2011

If you have a hearing loss...

How do you choose a cell phone?

How can you decide which one is best for you?

The January 8 meeting program is "Hearing Aid Compatibility: Choosing a Cell Phone that Works for You." With so many cell phone models and types, so many features and capabilities, and so many different companies providing cell phone service, the choices are bewildering. Is the cell phone loud enough and clear enough? Will it work with your hearing aid and other devices? How will the new services benefit you? Where can you find answers?

According to CTIA, wireless broadband is breaking down barriers to accessibility, and the majority of people with hearing limitations are using wireless to text, e-mail, and access the Internet. If you need help with the terminology surrounding this issue, join us for this series of short, captioned videos and for information about the Jitterbug phone from Karen Moulder. Let's break down some barriers!

Saturday, January 8, 2011
Meeting at 10:00 AM (Refreshments at 9:30)
Goodrich Center, 2500 Lipscomb Street, Fort Worth

What if hearing aids don't work for me?

By Kristi Albers M.A., Managing Editor, *Healthy Hearing*, posted December 8, 2010

I am considering purchasing hearing aids for the first time and am unsure of my decision. What if hearing aids don't work for me?

Today, hearing aids are programmed for your specific needs and the audiologist is able to make changes to them if necessary. If you're not happy with the way they fit or sound when you first get them, be assured that most people require a few adjustments of fine-tuning. In addition, it takes time for the brain to adapt to hearing sounds it hasn't heard in a while, so your hearing aids may sound more natural after you've had time to wear them. If not, be sure to return to your professional with details of what you're experiencing so that he or she can perform necessary adjustments.

To ensure your satisfaction with hearing aids, most states require a trial period - a specified time period within which you can return the devices for a refund. But remember - returned hearing aids can't help you hear better, so give yourself every opportunity to succeed with your instruments by working closely with your professional for follow-up and fine-tuning in order to ensure your satisfaction.



PAULETTE'S POSTS

Knowledge is of two kinds. We know a subject ourselves, or we know where we can find information on it.

*Samuel Johnson, quoted in Boswell's Life of Johnson
English author, critic, & lexicographer (1709 - 1784)*

Knowledge is power.

Sir Francis Bacon (1561 - 1626), Religious Meditations, Of Heresies, 1597

You may be wondering why I chose these quotes for my first column. Hearing loss changes our lives dramatically, and our knowledge of how to cope with its effects is the beginning of our quest to communicate as well as possible with others. The learning process can seem overwhelming. Finding reliable information is a challenge.

It is easy to get discouraged. Try to identify your most pressing problem and look for information about it. Ask others for help. Chances are, someone can provide a resource, suggest a particular device, or recommend a professional. You are not alone. The "primary purpose of HLA is to educate ourselves, our families, friends, coworkers, teachers, hearing health care providers, industry, government, and others about hearing loss." (<http://www.hearingloss.org/aboutus/mission.asp>) Our chapter programs should also reflect that purpose. If you have a specific program suggestion, please let one of the board members know.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

*Paulette Rook
paulette.rook@gmail.com*

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2500 Lipscomb Street
Fort Worth, TX 76110-2625
Telephone 817-926-5305

<http://www.hla-fw.net>
<http://www.hearingloss.org>

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Only **Hearing Loss Association of America** provides a national advocacy presence, a website with reliable, organized, and archived answers to questions about hearing loss and assistive technology, the *Hearing Loss Magazine*, with credible, current information, over 200 local support chapters and 14 state organizations, discounts to annual national conventions and many regional conferences. For \$35 per year, less than 70 cents a week, we give you information and encouragement to be a vital person in our hearing world. We are here for you because you care enough to be a part of the national concern for hearing loss. We appreciate your membership. If you have not become a national member, information and instructions are available at www.hearingloss.org.

Happy New Year!



**Hearing Loss Association
of America**

Fort Worth Chapter

meets on the second Saturday
of each month at the
Goodrich Center for the Deaf
and Hard of Hearing

2500 Lipscomb Street
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answers can help guide the future of our chapter. Speak up or send e-mail to an officer.

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Welcome, New Officers!

We congratulate and welcome new officers for the new year.

Paulette Rook assumes the office of President with a desire to continue progress within the organization and outreach to new people who need what we have to offer.

Emma Hill moves up to Vice President, with new program ideas and a long-standing concern for aiding senior citizens with hearing loss.

Annie Anderson comes on board as Secretary, bringing a background in human relations, the ADA, and organizational management.

Arnita Smith Garner continues as Treasurer and **Terri King** as Hospitality Chair. We still need someone to serve as Librarian/Historian and would be glad to have a new Editor.

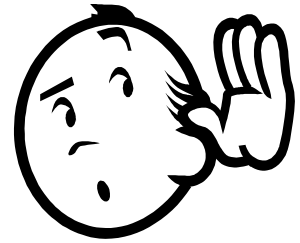
A new regime always brings new enthusiasm and ideas. Your ideas are also welcome and needed. What do you come to HLA to receive? How will you know when you get it? Your

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Many don't understand the realities of hearing loss



*By Carol Agate, J.D., administrative law judge with the California Unemployment Insurance Appeals Board
Published in The Communicator, newsletter of the Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, May, 2010*

"I got a new hearing aid. It cost \$3,000."

"What kind is it?"

"4:32 p.m."

Yes, no matter how expensive hearing aids are, they don't [always] provide clarity.

This leads to a lot of misunderstandings about them. We have probably all heard from people who don't think they need hearing aids: "I can hear perfectly well. You mumble." Or from friends of people with hearing loss: "He can hear me when he wants to."

The loss of clarity is why some people think they don't need hearing aids – they can still hear. And they think you mumble because they don't realize their hearing loss affects clarity. The biggest disappointment after buying new hearing aids is that people still mumble; the mumbling is just louder.

The lack of clarity also explains why you think he can hear you when he wants to. Some sounds are more difficult for some people, depending on the range of their loss. High-pitched or accented voices are the hardest to understand. It's important to note that an inability to understand an accented voice isn't a criticism of the speaker.

So what do you do when a person who is hard of hearing says, "What?" Your instinct is simply to say the same thing again and in the same tone of voice. But if it wasn't understood the first time, it probably won't be understood the second time. Try conveying the same idea in different words.

And don't get annoyed. We don't get annoyed at people who are blind or have limited mobility. Maybe people get annoyed at those with hearing loss because of the belief, "He can hear me when he wants to." And there is the mistaken assumption that just as glasses can provide perfect vision, hearing aids can provide perfect hearing.

Now that you know that communicating with a person with hearing aids might need some effort from you, what can you do to help? The most important thing is to face the person and not cover your mouth. We all can hear better when we see the speaker's mouth. For a person with hearing loss, seeing a mouth is often more critical than wearing hearing aids.

Don't chew or put your hand in front of your mouth.

Also, get his or her attention first. Use your normal speech, but more slowly than usual if you tend to talk fast. Hearing loss means it takes longer for the brain to decipher the words, even when they are clear.

Don't shout; that just distorts the words.

Don't speak from another room.

The hardest situation for understanding speech is with background noise. Restaurants or parties make it harder for everyone to converse, but for a person with hearing loss, it can be impossible. Give that person the seat facing the room so there is less noise from behind. If you invite a person with hearing loss to your home, don't play background music.

For those with a hearing loss, trying to understand speech can be exhausting. It demands constant concentration. It is often so much easier to fake it. Despite what a bad idea that is, most people with hearing loss do it occasionally, thus reinforcing the myth that they can “hear when they want to.” Hearing loss can be isolating. Ending the isolation takes effort from the person with the loss and from those communicating with that person. Please make the effort as graciously as you do as when you open a door for another. Don’t be annoyed when you can’t be understood on the first try. This is an invisible and poorly understood disability, but with your help it can be less disabling.

Hearing Loss Causes: Diet and Calories

Healthy Hearing [newsletter@healthyhearing.com] Tuesday, December 14th 2010

We all know the important role diet plays in good health. Eat a healthy, well-balanced diet and live a healthy, well-balanced life. Eat junk and quality of life disappears faster than a bag of pork rinds. Diet and good health have been studied for years. However, recent findings associate diet with something new – your ability to hear.

Free Radicals

Sounds like a street cry from the ‘60s, but free radicals are serious business when it comes to good health. Free radicals are naturally produced by the body whenever the body, or a body part, is stressed. A nicked finger will stress the body (a little) and the body reacts by producing free radicals – corrosive little molecules that damage the body at the cell level.

Research shows that, as we age, our bodies produce more free radicals, linking these toxic little molecules to the aging process itself. Today, many researchers believe that free radicals, in fact, contribute to and even hasten the aging process. This can’t be good.

What the Research Shows

A study conducted at the University of Wisconsin-Madison provides compelling results on the relationship between the **amount** of food we eat and our longevity – how long we live. And it’s not about what you eat – it’s about how much you eat – your caloric intake. An enzyme called Sirt3 lessens the damaging impact free radicals have on the human body. By eating less than our “normal” intake of calories, the body produces increased levels of Sirt3 that combat free radical damage and, if we curb the harmful effects of free radicals, we may, indeed, slow down the process of aging.

Diet and Hearing

The hearing mechanism, located inside your ears, is a complex, delicate collection of the tympanic membrane (ear drum), the three smallest bones in the body, the cochlea, and other sensitive body bits that enable people to hear the world around them. However, free radicals, associated with aging, damage this delicate marvel of nature, leading to age-related hearing loss. Most people, by the time they reach 60, experience at least some degree of hearing loss.

Now that researchers have isolated Sirt3 as a key defense against the impact free radicals have on hearing, we all have some choices to make about just how much we eat and quality of life. The equation is simple. Want to live 10 years longer? Consume 10% fewer calories daily. Now that may sound easy, but eating is one of the joys of life, and making that sacrifice every day may get tired fast. On the other hand: "If we can find drugs or nutritional interventions that activate Sirt3, we may be able to slow down the aging process in mammals," study author Tomas Prolla said.

We’re a long way off from developing that magic pill that’ll combat free radicals, but this research demonstrates that eating less extends not only life, but quality of life, including your ability to hear. So, do you cut down on your food in-take? Not an easy thing to do, as most of us have already discovered. However, you can substitute healthier foods for your fatty favorites to eliminate some of those empty calories consumed at the fast food place. Think about what you eat, and consider the quality of life. Eat less and you’ll age more slowly, according to the latest research. Eat less and you’ll hear better longer.

If movie captions are important to you, tell the DOJ!

Twenty years ago, HCAA members came out in force when it was time to comment on rules under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Our comments helped shape the way the rules were written. We need you to do that again to push for captioned movies.

The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) published a notice that it is considering changes to its regulations to require movie theater owners and operators to show captioned movies. DOJ is inviting written comments from members of the public. **The DOJ proposes to require movie theater owners and operators to show films with closed captioning. DOJ proposes to limit this requirement to no more than 50 percent of the films shown, and DOJ is willing to give owners and operators up to 5 years to get to the 50 percent mark.**

HCAA believes that "full and equal enjoyment" of services under the Americans with Disabilities Act means that people with hearing loss must be provided the kind of accommodations that would allow us to attend any movie anytime. For people with significant hearing loss, that means 100% captioning. We believe that an across the board industry cap of 50% is arbitrary and inconsistent with the law.

HCAA's position on movie captioning is:

- All movies should be made accessible to movie goers with hearing loss though captioning.
- People with hearing loss should be able to see any movie at any time on any day.
- There are many ways to caption movies today. HCAA does not specify the method used to caption the movie so long as it provides effective communication.

DOJ is seeking comments in response to 26 questions. The entire document with all the questions can be accessed at <http://www.regulations.gov>. You can reply to some or all of the questions. We suggest at a minimum, that you respond to DOJ Question #1:

1. DOJ is proposing that the percentage of movie screens offering closed captioning be set at 10 percent after one year and increased 10 percent a year until 50 percent is reached. Does this approach provide a proper balance between providing accessibility to consumers, on one hand, and giving owners and operators time to acquire the necessary equipment, on the other hand?

Send your comments to the DOJ today!

Comments sent by U.S. mail must be postmarked and electronic comments must be transmitted on or before **January 24, 2011**.

- State the question(s) you are responding to. You can focus all your comments on question #1 or add more.
- State why you are interested in responding. For example, that you have a hearing loss and cannot attend movies without effective closed captioning.
- State what you want to see: 100% captions, 5 years or less, no later than January 2016.
- State how lack of captions has impacted you. State why you think 100% captioning is needed.
- Thank the DOJ
- Sign your name.

We did it for the ADA. Let's do it again for movie captioning. Send your comments to the DOJ!

Brenda Battat, Executive Director, Hearing Loss Association of America

Hearing Loss Association – Fort Worth 2011 Annual Fees

(Make checks payable to: Hearing Loss Association of Fort Worth)

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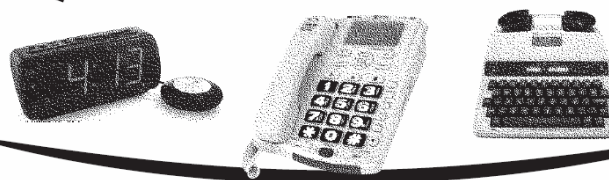
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Saturday, January 8:
**Hearing Aid Compatibility:
Choosing a Cell Phone
that Works for You**

**How do you choose a cell phone?
How do you decide which is best
FOR YOU?**

More program information
on page one

**Meeting 10:00 AM – 11:30
(Refreshments at 9:30)**

*We have listening devices and live captioning
for communication accessibility at our meetings.*

2500 Lipscomb Street Fort Worth, TX 76110

At Last, a Cell Phone for Seniors!

(You REALLY have to be OLD
to appreciate THIS joke.)

