

# Audiology HealthCare News

A newsletter for our patients, their families and friends

Winter 2014



## ONE-WEEK TURN-AROUND TIME

The process of deciding to try a hearing aid can be stressful for some people. Just the thought that there may be something wrong is a concern. It is not unusual to wait weeks to get in to see a hearing professional and then weeks to get the selected amplification. Why? When scheduling and ordering is done right, in most cases, it will only take a week from start to fitting

When an appointment is made for an audiological evaluation, the results of the testing should be available at that appointment. There should not be a significant delay between the evaluation and the results and recommendations. Pros and cons of various hearing aids should be discussed, as well as financial obligations. Some, but certainly not all, insurances cover a portion of hearing aid pricing. Most insurances will cover the hearing evaluation, if there is medical necessity, such as a change in hearing, noises in the ear, history of ear problems, et cetera.

When a hearing aid or hearing aids are selected, an ear impression may be necessary. In this process the audiologist injects silicone impression material into the ear canal to make a copy of the ear. Some hearing aids are made from those impressions, and sometimes the impressions are used for accessories, such as custom earmolds or eartips. Once this is done, the purchase agreement signed, medical clearance or waiver is obtained, and payment is made, the order is ready to send to manufacturer. Most manufacturers will accommodate a one-week turn-around time when asked, so that the hearing instruments can be fit the following week.

The same is true when a hearing aid is being repaired. Except in the case of a disaster, weather or otherwise, there is usually no reason why someone should have to wait longer than a week for hearing help. When you hear better, you live better.

## What's New?



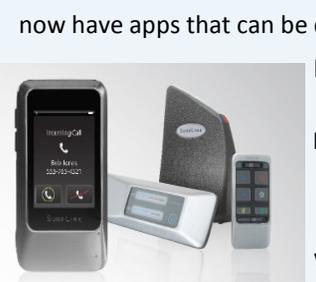
In 2014, many of the Hearing Aid manufacturers have introduced new assistive devices to make communication easier. These devices include remote microphones for better hearing in noise, wireless communication



to connect with cell phones, TV's and even landline phones. Some of these devices connect with even the most will allow you to hear on the telephone, which understanding. There are when the doorbell rings, the signal is sent directly to your app for that" is the newest aid industry. Several of the



smallest hearing aids and with both ears while talking makes a huge difference in also devices that alert you phone is ringing, etc. A hearing aids. "There's an catch-phrase in the hearing hearing aid manufacturers



programs, and to turn the hearing aids on and off. Many of these devices are "backwards compatible", meaning that they work with existing hearing aids, so you don't have to buy



new hearings to use them. Just let us know if you are interested in trying one of these devices!

## 10 facts about earwax

Earwax can be goopy and gross, but we all have it. So get an earful of these earwax facts.

1. What is earwax made of?  
Earwax (cerumen) is a combination of sloughed-off skin cells from inside of the ear, and secretions from the cerumenous glands in the outer ear canal.
2. Do you know your earwax type?  
Earwax comes in two types - wet and dry. The kind you have depends on genetics. People of North-eastern Asian descent, especially those from China or Korea, tend to have dry ear wax, while the earwax of people from other regions is wet.
3. How earwax is like nose hair?  
Earwax is another of our body's mundane, under-appreciated, yet totally amazing protective devices. Like eyelashes and nose hair, earwax shields our body from outside invaders, including dust, bacteria, and other micro-organisms that can get in and irritate, inflame, or infect.
4. How earwax is like tears?  
Earwax lubricates our ears, in much the same way as tears lubricate our eyes. Without adequate amounts of earwax, our ears would feel dry and itchy.
5. Earwax cleans up after itself  
Thanks to earwax, our ears are self-cleaning. Whenever you move your jaw or chew, you help keep earwax churning slowly from the eardrum to the ear opening, where it will then either dry up, flake off, or fall out.
6. Your ears are "no trespassing" zones  
Since our ears are self-cleaning, we should never, ever stick anything in them! That includes those cotton-tipped swabs that seem perfectly

designed to fit inside the narrow ear canal. Keep these swabs and any other objects - including your fingers - out of your ears. When you put something in your ear - to scratch an itch or to attempt to remove wax - you risk pushing wax further into the ear, where it can become blocked.

7. Listen up: No candles!  
In an attempt to clear excess wax, some people have tried ear candling. In ear candling, a person lies on his or her side while a long cone-shaped candle is nestled just inside of the ear canal. The candle is then set aflame and, it is claimed, the warmth will soften and suction out the wax. Ear candling does not have any proven benefit and can cause burns, wax blockage, and punctured eardrum.
8. How earwax affects hearing  
Blocked earwax is the most common cause of hearing loss. This can happen if wax is pushed back toward the eardrum or if the ears produce more earwax than is needed. Symptoms of impacted earwax include earache, feeling of fullness in the ear, a sensation that the ear is plugged, and tinnitus or ringing in the ear. Your ear may also itch, have an odour, or emit a discharge.
9. Ear cleaning  
If you suspect that your ears are blocked by excess earwax, you should seek a doctor's assistance in clearing it. People with diabetes or weakened immune systems should always consult their doctor before attempting to remove ear wax at home.
10. Wax and hearing aids  
Wax is one of the most frequently reported problems with hearing aids. Remember to replace your wax guard frequently. If you do not have wax guards with your hearing aid, keep the sound opening clean.

-excerpted from Amy Toffelmire, CHealth.com

### What is the difference between an audiologist and a hearing aid dispenser?

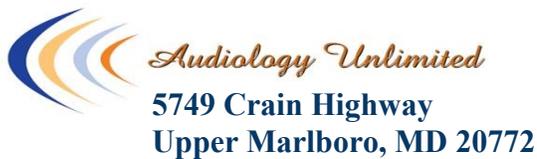
There is confusion these days about who is providing hearing services. When someone purchases a hearing aid, it is important to know who is doing the evaluation, selection and fitting. So, what is the difference between an audiologist and a hearing aid dispenser/specialist? Hearing aid dispensers/specialists are not audiologists.

The entry level in Maryland for Audiologists is a doctoral degree, requiring a minimum of 4 years of post-graduate academic and clinical training. Most audiologists have a Doctor of Audiology degree. However, some have a Ph.D. or Ed.D. All have completed at least 9 months of the supervised professional experience and passed a national examination in audiology.

Audiologists are trained to diagnose and treat disorders of the hearing and balance mechanism. Training includes anatomy and physiology, hearing aids and other amplification devices, electrophysiology of the auditory system, acoustics, psychoacoustics and auditory rehabilitation. Continuing education is also required to maintain licensure in Maryland. To be Board Certified, by the American Board of Audiology, additional continuing education is required to stay current and must include courses in ethics.

In contrast, to qualify for a full license as a Hearing Aid Dispenser, an applicant must be of good moral character, be a graduate of any accredited 2-year post-secondary program with a diploma or degree in any subject, take the State Licensing Examination and provide proof of successful completion of the International Hearing Society Curriculum entitled "Distance Learning for Professionals in Hearing Health Sciences", which can be completed in a week, and pass the written, practical and law examinations given by the Board.

As apply put in an article by Pacific Northwest Audiology, "The Bottom Line: Hearing aid dispensers and audiologists are both licensed to fit and program hearing aids...but that is where the similarities end. There's a vast difference in education and training requirements between Doctors of Audiology and hearing aid specialists. This training edge allows audiologists to pursue a rigorous process of professional diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation...but hearing aid dispensers must concentrate their efforts on hearing aid sales, fitting, and programming."



**The response to our first news-letter was so positive, we are trying it again. Hope you find it informative. Sincerely,**

*Kathy Mellock, AuD.*

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**Refer a Friend and Get Free Batteries!**

