

CALIFORNIA EAR
INSTITUTE
*Hear For Your
Future!*



HEARING DEVICE CENTER

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WE'RE ALL EARS!

HEARING DEVICE CENTER EDITION



MEDICAL/SURGICAL SERVICES



AUDIOLOGY



LET THEM HEAR FOUNDATION



CALIFORNIA EAR INSTITUTE

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What is Hearing Loss...and how can CEI help?

Hearing is one of our five senses (touch, smell, taste, sight, and hearing). A reduction in hearing ability is called a hearing loss or hearing impairment. There are approximately 500 million people world wide with some form of hearing loss. It is estimated that this phenomenon is supposed to grow to 700 million by the year 2015. Increasing amounts of noise in today's environment seems to be the main factor in this skyrocketing number. Due to the fact that noise, not age, is the primary contributing factor in hearing loss, it is not surprising that 50% of all hearing loss takes place in people under the age of 65 years old.

Hearing loss is a common occurrence. The sounds around us are perceived by our hearing system

24 hours a day. Hearing is not a sense that you can 'turn off'. Our hearing works at several levels. We perceive background sounds, such as traffic noise, or more relevant sounds, such as



the ringing of an alarm clock. What is generally most important is, however, the ability to hear speech to communicate. Our hearing system must be able to distinguish among a multitude of sounds – from the soft rustle

of leaves to complex sentences. When our hearing ability is reduced, we are no longer able to hear sounds optimally.

If your communication and hearing difficulties cannot be improved with intervention from our physicians, the professional Audiology staff of the CEI Hearing Device Center is waiting to help you.

Current hearing device technology has improved! It is now reasonable to say that everyone with difficulty understanding family members or soft television is able to be helped. We want the opportunity to help you!

-Lisa Olson

What happens if I put it off..?

"I'm too young!" It's not bad enough yet!" "No one I know likes their hearing aids!" "We can't afford it now!"

Statements like the ones above come often from people who recognize the presence of hearing loss but try to find every excuse not to do anything about it. This is procrastination.



Hearing loss often seems like a small problem to many people and it might not be important enough to them to address. They may feel like they are getting along fine with an occasional "what did you say?" or "excuse me?" (Ask your family how occasional it is). Another way of describing this procrastination is called sensory deprivation. Much of how we perceive reality is information sent to our brains from our delicate sensory systems. Impairment to any one of our five senses does result in an altered state of reality. If you miss portions of

communication and perhaps do not realize it, you are experiencing one thing while something else entirely may have been intended. **When you experience auditory deprivation, your natural instinct is to avoid social situations just because they are uncomfortable.** There is now reliable scientific evidence to document the fact that untreated hearing loss can lead to a variety of unhealthy emotional conditions. The Hearing Instrument Association in conjunction with the National Council on Aging ran a study with over 2,000 hearing impaired adults and over 1700 family members. This study concluded that people who suffer from hearing loss were more likely to experience increased anger, frustration, insecurity, nervousness, tension, anxiety, irritability, discontentment, depression and more likely to be self-critical. Experiencing only one of these would seem enough to inspire one to seek help, but unfortunately, many people with hearing loss tend to experience a variety of these unhealthy emotional states.

In addition, research has shown that failure to stimulate hearing by not wearing hearing devices when needed may result in a more rapid

decline in speech recognition. These reports were based on a substantial number of subjects who possessed at least a moderate degree of hearing loss in both ears but received only one hearing aid. As a result of auditory deprivation in the unaided ear, a reduction in speech recognition occurred. In



some cases, this was reversible by adding a second hearing aid.

If hearing loss is not addressed as a major health issue, the risks of negative emotional impact are far too great. These are consequences that can be avoided, but often are not because people do not realize the influence of untreated hearing loss. If you are taking time to assess your own communication problems and wondering if you are a candidate for hearing devices – please take the necessary step of contacting us for a diagnostic evaluation sooner rather than later.

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How can I understand speech better in a noisy restaurant?

Not being able to understand our friends and family in a crowded noisy restaurant is an unfortunate and common experience. As we all know, when the babble of other voices, silverware, chairs scraping the floor and the “open, noisy kitchen” becomes loud, even people with normal hearing begin to watch faces, lean forward and guess at what’s being said. This frustration is only occasional for most people with normal hearing, but can be an everyday experience for someone with even a moderate amount of hearing loss. Newer hearing aid technology is capable of helping the hearing aid wearer hear more of the speech from the people in front and not as much from behind. This directional technology represents a significant improvement in the wearers’ ability to understand speech in noise. For many individuals with a more severe loss or



with a distortion as a component to their hearing loss, understanding in a noisy restaurant may still be impossible. In order to bring the speakers’ voice out over the background noise we use FM systems.

What is FM?

FM is a wireless communication technology which is very common today for many different applications including baby monitoring systems and walky-talkies. An FM system to improve understanding in noise works on the same principle. The transmitter microphone sends the speakers’ voice to a miniature receiver worn by the listener. The receiver can be worn alone by someone with near normal hearing or coupled to the persons’ hearing aid if the loss is moderate or severe.

How does it work? Either point the transmitter



microphone toward the person you want to understand or place it as near to them as possible. You may ask them to clip the microphone to their collar or place it near them on a table or podium. The closer the microphone is to the desired sound the better the clarity. If you are wearing the receiver coupled to a hearing aid it is possible to turn off the microphones of the hearing aid (this reduces the background noise) and only hear from the transmitter microphone. It truly is hearing only what you want!



If you have problems understanding in noise – whether you wear hearing aids or not – ask for a demonstration of this superb technology!

It’s easy and amazingly helpful!



How do I go about getting a hearing device that will help me..?

At California Ear Institute we are interested in developing a partnership with our patients. We recognize that patients are looking for our advice, expertise and experience to help solve their communication problems, but we want our patients to know that we perceive our role as a coach as well as a problem-solver. Hearing, listening and understanding are very complicated tasks. **Functioning better in our complex noisy world is an achievable goal.** We bring our up to date equipment, the most advanced technology, our programming skills and availability to the task. You as the patient bring your interest and willingness to partner with us in your hearing rehabilitation.

The process of communicating better begins with a complete diagnostic evaluation – both medically and audiological. Patients who are candidates for hearing devices are scheduled for a device consultation. This appointment is designed to give you the opportunity to ask your audiologist any questions you may have about hearing devices, how they work, what you should expect, cost, etc. It also gives the audiologist the opportunity to learn more about

you – your problem situations and lifestyle. This information assists the audiologist in making a recommendation for specific devices that will be optimal for you. Hearing devices are typically ordered after the consultation and an appointment is scheduled for the fitting in approximately two weeks.



At the hearing device fitting, patients have the experience of listening to their devices as they are being programmed. Individual preferences for tone, loudness, clarity etc are obtained and accommodated in the programming. Patients are taught how to insert and remove the devices as well as change batteries and manipulate any switches. Family members are encouraged to attend the fitting and all follow-up appointments so their questions and expectations can be addressed.

At CEI we want you to use your

devices successfully. We know that most people adjust gradually to more sound so we schedule follow up visits generally at two week intervals. Adjusting to amplification takes a different amount of time for each patient. The first weeks of hearing device usage are filled with many new sounds. People often report that they hear the “new” hum of the refrigerator, the clicking sound of the turn signal and the birds singing. Although you will be hearing more, many familiar sounds will seem different and may be disturbing; such as the roar of traffic or the hum of conversation at the shopping mall. As you become accustomed to your listening through your hearing devices your brain will identify these sounds and it will be natural to you to hear them.



You are part of the CEI family and we want to see you at least

once per year or whenever a problem arises. **Optimal hearing healthcare means a yearly hearing test as well as periodic appointments with a physician to make sure your ears are healthy and free of wax.** If your hearing changes over time we are able to re-program your hearing devices so that they continue to help you in the most complete way possible.

It is our policy to provide complete service. We encourage our patients to call us when they experience any problems with their instruments. If they are not able to come to an open hearing aid clinic we schedule adjustment appointments at their convenience. We have regular follow-up appointments scheduled with yearly hearing tests to make sure that hearing devices programming is always optimized for each patients’ hearing loss.

If you have purchased devices elsewhere or recently moved near our offices you may have your devices checked or adjusted at CEI. There is a fee for office time but we are able to honor manufacturer’s warranties. **Please contact us for more information!**