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\* Le Goff et al. 2016, Opn Clinical Evidence White Paper, Oticon, Inc.



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2019

## WINTER NEWSLETTER



### NEW STUDY

#### Supports Brain Training for Seniors with Hearing Loss

According to the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD), approximately one in three people between ages 65 and 75 experiences hearing loss. For those over 75, the statistic is closer to one in two. The term for age-related hearing loss is presbycusis, which is caused by natural wear and tear of the auditory system.

*The process of hearing occurs not just in the ears,  
but in the brain as well.*

The ears channel soundwaves and convert them to vibrations, which are transmitted to the brain via the auditory nerve for interpretation.

According to a recent study by the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary, senior patients were able to improve speech recognition by exercising their brains with computerized games.

Throughout the study, elderly patients with hearing loss used a closed-loop (CL) computer audio game that had them listen for subtle changes in sound to solve puzzles. At the end of the eight weeks, those in the CL group correctly identified 25 percent more words in background noise than those in the control group, whose video game did not include sound cues for the puzzles.

This is significant in the hearing industry as it may change the way audiologists work with their patients. There are a number of brain training programs already on the market that some specialists have implemented in their patient care, including Listening and Communication Enhancement (LACE), cLEARWorks4EARs and Angel Sound.

### Our Provider



#### Mark Scoones, Au.D.

is a board-certified audiologist granted by the American Board of Audiology. Dr. Scoones was a former board member for the Audiology Foundation of America and previously appointed by Washington State Governor to the Washington State Board of Hearing and Speech and served for seven years. Dr. Scoones is a retired Navy Captain with 35 years of Naval military service.

Dr. Scoones was born and raised in Montana. When not in the clinic, you may find him attending theatre events, on the golf course, cycling or landscaping and gardening at home.





# HOW Dental Health Affects Your Hearing

You may be surprised to hear this, but keeping a healthy mouth can also preserve the health of your hearing. Seem like a stretch? Not when you consider this:

Your mouth is full of bacteria – some good, some bad. When you get an infection in your mouth, such as thrush, gingivitis or canker sores, harmful bacteria enter your bloodstream and make their way to your ears and brain. This can lead to inflammation and narrowing of the blood vessels in your ears.

Your ears and brain work together in order for you to experience the sense of sound. Your outer ear collects sound waves and channels them through the ear canal to the eardrum. The eardrum converts soundwaves into vibrations, which are then sent to the inner ear. The inner ear contains tiny hair cells, called stereocilia, that translate vibrations into electrical impulses that are sent to the brain for interpretation via the auditory nerve.

***The good news is, you can proactively take steps to help preserve your hearing.***

These hair cells can easily be damaged by trauma to the head, exposure to loud noise and even poor blood circulation. Once these cells are damaged, they do not heal, which causes permanent hearing loss. This process can be sped up by inflammation stemming from the bacteria in your mouth.

The good news is, you can proactively take steps to help preserve your hearing. Brushing your teeth twice a day, flossing every night and seeing your dentist for check-ups twice a year can help prevent dental issues like infections.

Similarly, you should preserve your hearing by wearing hearing protection and visiting your local audiologist for regular hearing exams.

# DON'T LET HEARING LOSS Prevent You from Dining Out



Individuals with hearing loss often have difficulty communicating in environments with excessive background noise, such as busy restaurants. However, there are strategies you can employ to help you enjoy dining out at your favorite restaurant.

***The following tips will help ensure a positive restaurant experience for those with hearing loss:***

**1**

***Choose a booth over a table.***

Tables are typically situated in the middle of the room, and offer little respite from noise. Try calling ahead and requesting a booth if available.

**2**

***Don't sit near the kitchen.***

Don't sit near the kitchen. Regardless of whether you end up with a booth or table, try to avoid being seated near the kitchen or bar. These high-traffic areas tend to be the noisiest.

**3**

***Avoid sitting near the loudspeaker or air conditioner.***

Avoid sitting near the loudspeaker or air conditioner. A comfortable temperature and ambient music are essential to the dining experience, but sitting too close is sure to prove distracting. If you are being steered in this direction, ask your host or hostess if they can seat you elsewhere.

**4**

***When dining with a group, position yourself in the center of the table.***

This ensures you are able to hear all parts of the conversation without straining to hear somebody at the opposite end.

**5**

***Maintain eye contact with the person who is speaking.***

Paying close attention to visual cues can help improve your understanding in noisy environments.

**6**

***Check out the menu before you go.***

Check out the menu before you go. Preparing in advance by previewing the menu on the restaurant's website will ensure you know the different types of food available and how it is prepared, so you won't misunderstand or have to ask the server to repeat him - or herself. If the restaurant has daily specials available, these are usually posted in the waiting area or on a menu supplement; if not, ask for a written copy.

