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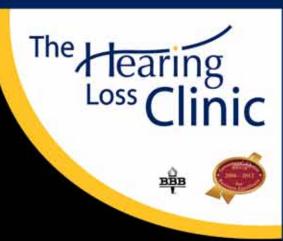
May 2012

HEARINGHEALTH



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So the world may Learn how Marlee Matlin & Miley Cyrus are delivering the gift of hearing to children

"After I went on my first mission to Haiti with the Starkey Hearing Foundation, I felt so drawn to helping others for the first time and immediately wanted to look for another chance to go back and help again"

The Patient Journey p. 04
Learn what to expect from your first visit to living with your new hearing aid.

Ageing and Hearing Loss p. 07 Learn the symptoms and where to turn

Learn about Hearing Loss

he leading cause of hearing loss today is noise damage, resulting from exposure to very loud sounds, such as an explosion, or more commonly, through the long-term overexposure to loud music and industrial machinery.

Noise-Induced Hearing Loss (NIHL) is cumulative, permanent, and irreversible, but also largely pre-

Hearing loss with age

More than half of Canadians over the age of 65 will experience a decline in the quality of their hearing. Many people in their 30s and 40s - and an astonishing 25 percent of young people entering the workforce (Work-Safe BC, 2005) - are now showing early warning signs of hearing loss.

Children are also increasingly at risk. A major US study in The Journal Paediatrics found that "approximately 12.5 percent of American children and young adults in the U.S. are suffering from a hearing disability known as Noise-Induced hearing Threshold Shifts (NITS).

NITS is basically a change in hearing sensitivity that is experienced as temporary hearing dullness" (Niskar et al,2001).

Youth at risk

The increasing prevalence of hearing impairments among youth is cause for alarm. This is why the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Society (DH-HS) in Calgary runs outreach programming in schools to encourage children to "turn down the volume" on their MP3 players and smartphones. The goal is to teach children and youth to stay within a 'safe' listening range, by limiting exposure to sounds greater than 85dB.

Showing signs

Being aware of the early warning signs of a hearing impairment is key to managing the condition.

Some people may experience a ringing or buzzing in the ears. Sounds might seem muffled. Voices might be unclear on the telephone. There might be a need to turn the TV up to full volume. Some people might find it hard to understand speech in noisy environments, or have difficulty following conversations in social settings and at work.

Children at risk for hearing loss might have articulation problems, speech delays, and difficulty locating sounds. They might respond inappropriately to questions, fail to reply when called, or seem to speak differently than other children of the same age.



Christina Smith Deaf & Hard of Hearing Society

MY BEST TIPS

Remember that hearing loss is irreversible, therefore prevention is critical.

Remember the 60/60 rule: no more than 60 percent maximum volume for a total of 60 minutes per day.

Use larger headphones that rest over the ear opening rather than earbuds placed directly in the ear.

Share what you know about noise-induced hearing loss with family, friends and co-workers. Explain to children that their hearing is delicate and important. Call attention to sounds that are harmful. Encourage others to protect their ears by avoiding loud noises or wearing hearing protection.

The first step

But the first hurdle in the journey towards a better quality of life for those experiencing hearing loss is admitting that there might be a problem, and then locating relevant resources. The first step is to consult a professional audiologist and complete an audiogram - a hearing test to establish the extent of hearing loss. Sign up for a speechreading course that gives the hard of hearing tools and strategies to communicate better. Speak up and ask for assistive listening devices, FM systems, or real-time captioning at events. Deaf and Hard of Hearing Society (DHHS) provides equipment that augments the work of hearing aids: amplified phones, personal listening devices, and signalling systems. They also help those with low incomes secure the funding to purchase this equipment.

Necessary support

With Canada's ageing population and the increased incidence of Noise-Induced Hearing Loss, people with hearing loss are not alone. DH-HS can provide the information, education, support, and products that provide the right solution, whatever the problem.

1ST EDITION, MAY 2012

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EAR FACTS!



■ To clean the outer ear, use a damp wash cloth, alcohol based wipes, or a cotton swab such as a Q-tip. You should ONLY use Q-tips for the outer ear. If inserted, it may push wax further into the canal causing impaction. Do not use household objects or anything sharp to clean the

Ear wax is naturally produced to protect your eardrum from hazards such as bacteria, insects, and water. When excessive build-up occurs, softeners such as baby oil can be used safely to help loosen the wax. If this proves ineffective, an appointment with your hearing specialist or physician should be made.

BRITTANY RANDALL H.I.S. editorial@mediaplanet.com

Regulating a Profession: What does it mean for me?

In Alberta, the Health Professions Act (HPA) is a piece of legislation that "regulates" 32 health professions under one umbrella. However, it allows professional organizations or colleges, (like the Alberta College of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists or ACSLPA) to self-govern its members in a manner that serves and protects the public.

Because we serve the public, we must be held accountable for our actions. This does not suggest the public should be wary of us.

The college is responsible for registration of members who are qualified to practice, from new students to established professionals from other jurisdictions; establishing, maintaining and enforcing standards of practice and continuing competence programs; as well as implementing a process to address



Holly Gusnowsky, R.Aud **Director of Professional Practice Audiology,**

Alberta College of Speech-

Language Pathologists and

Audiologists

complaints from the public about its members. It establishes that we are committed to "best practice."

Raising the profile

Through inclusion, legislation like the HPA allows professions' profiles to be raised in several ways. The HPA lists protected professional titles that help the public identify qualified practitioners (e.g., audiologist) and access their regulatory body or college.

Qualification is key Being identified as a regulatory body allows mutual recognition with other provincial and national bodies that deal with reciprocal agre-

ements (e.g., member recognition

and portability.) Working at a go-

vernment level can establish a pro-

fession as "most qualified" to assist

with consultation when another college is requesting expansion for their scope of practice or an application to regulate a new profession.

The importance of regulation At the end of the day, regulation for

audiology members, particularly in Alberta, has been extremely important for recognition as a valid and valued profession with provincial and federal governments. This is especially true, given the

fact that there is a relatively low number to our membership. Promotion of the profession is accomplished through educating government and the public about our qualifications and is invoked through legislation. Regulation ensures health professionals are practicing to the best of their abilities in a safe manner

that can only be a benefit to us all.



We need to talk about headphones

SHOWCASE

Over the past 5 years, I've received more than 30 requests from various media outlets (TV, radio, Newspaper) to provide comments or interviews asking whether headphone use is hazardous to hearing.

Portable music popularity

At some point, just like the McDonald's signs that used to say how many billion people were served, it stops making sense to count how many iPod/smartphone/portable media devices there are. Let's just agree the number is in the millions and that most people have one.

One of the huge advantages of moving to digital media is the ability to carry thousands of songs with you wherever you go. Seldom, if ever, do we go outside and not encounter individuals using headphones while they walk to work, ride the bus or subway, go for a morning run, or exercise at the gym.

There are many reasons we do this. In some cases, the headphones isolate us from the presence of unwanted sounds (conversations of others, traffic noise, banging equipment;) in other cases, it allows us to control what we listen to (after all,

PROFILE

Bill Hodgetts

Bill Hodgetts is an Associate Professor in the Department of Speech Pathology and Audiology at the University of Alberta. He holds a joint appointment at the Institute for Reconstructive Sciences in Medicine (iRSM) where he is program director for bone conduction amplification. He obtained his B.A. (Psychology) and M.Sc. (Audiology) from the University of Western Ontario and his Ph.D. (Rehab Sciences) from the University of Alberta. Bill is also a director and chair of the scientific advisory committee for the noise cancellation.) Canadian Academy of Audiology.

our personal music library is better than the one at the gym, right?)

The sound choice

In 2007, our lab started a line of research looking into the risks associated with headphone use. In one study, we looked at whether the type of headphone that you wore had an impact on the listening levels that people chose in different environments.

Each subject listened to a song in 3 environments (quiet, traffic noise, and cafeteria babble) with three different styles of headphones (stock earbuds sold with most devices, over-the-ear headphones and overthe-ear headphones with active



We found, perhaps unsurprisingly, that the earbud style allowed more background noise into the ear, which forced the listeners to select a higher volume on the device in order to drown out the surrounding noise.

Destructive decibels

As a result, people using earbuds have a shorter time window to listen to their devices before they run the risk of hearing damage. The reason for this is that hearing risk is a combination of how loud a sound is and the length of time to which you are

For example, in Canada, 87 dBA is considered safe (without hearing protection) for 8 hours. However, if the level climbs to 90 dBA, it is only safe for 4 hours. If the level climbs

"People using earbuds have a shorter time window to listen to their devices before they run the risk of hearing damage."

to 96 dBA it is only safe for 1 hour. In this study we measured the maximum level achieved when the device was at full volume and found that you would only be safe at that level for about 90 seconds!

Turn it down

Fortunately, most people don't choose levels high enough to cause damage (for the amount of time they use the device,) even with the earbuds in noisy places. In another study, we found that the number of people listening at unsafe levels goes up when exercising at a gym (nearly 40 percent of subjects are at risk.)

The increased levels were mostly to "drown out" the background noise, but at least part of it can be explained by the extra motivation that louder music provides.

In another study, we looked exclusively at teenagers riding the bus to and from school. Again - some, but certainly not all - teenagers listen at levels that might be considered unsafe.

The run down

So what have we learned from this research?

- Some headphone users are abusers. We've all sat next to one of these individuals and listened to their mu-
- Most headphone users are not

sic, even if we didn't want to.

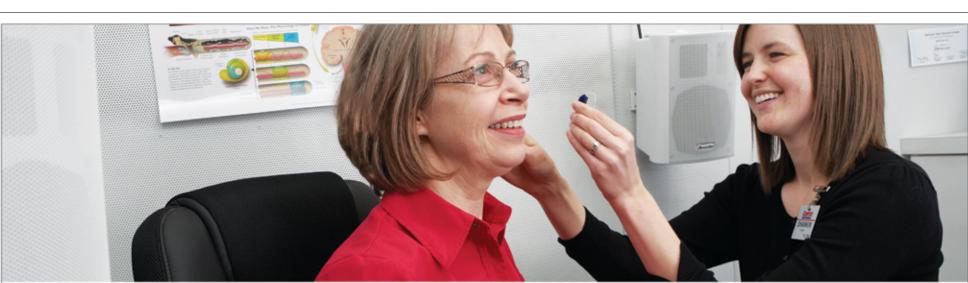
■ There are some situations and headphone styles that "force" even non-abusers to listen at potentially

Now you know!

unsafe levels.

Whenever listening with headphones, be aware of the environment you are in and how noisy it is. If you are frequently in a situation (transit commute) where the noise levels are high, invest in a decent set of noisecancelling headphones.

Even earbuds that form a seal in the ear canal (for you gym goers) block enough noise to make it safer for your hearing. If you have any concerns about your hearing please seek help from your local audiologist: http://www.canadianaudiology.ca/ consumer.html



COSTCO HEARING AID CENTRES OFFER SOUND SERVICES

Most people don't think about getting their hearing checked every year like they do their blood pressure, vision, or cholesterol. This may be because hearing loss is something that happens gradually over a period of time. An annual hearing exam helps keep track of any hearing loss and its possible progression. This allows your hearing to be aided, if needed - keeping you active and involved with life.

Take time for an annual hearing exam

The good news is that Costco Hearing Aid Centres offer much more than just hearing aids at exceptional savings. As one of the largest hearing aid retailers in the country (with 33 locations across Canada), the centres offer a comprehensive hearing

Costco Hearing Aid Centres offer comprehensive hearing tests included with your membership.

test included with membership, to determine if someone could be helped by a hearing aid.

This complimentary hearing test takes place in a sound booth, lasts about an hour and is conducted by highly qualified, audiologists or licensed hearing instrument practitioners using the latest in sophisticated audiometric testing equipment.

A variety of tests are conducted including the pure-tone hearing assessment to determine the tones a person hears at selected pitches and loudness. An ear exam using an otoscope connected to a video camera is also used, allowing members to view the inside of their ear canal while it's examined.

If the tests show hearing in the normal range, Costco keeps the results on file as a base

line. If testing reveals hearing loss that could be helped by hearing aids, the clinician will recommend the best solutions for that member, either a Kirkland Signature brand or one of the other state-of-the-art products from major hearing aid manufacturers.

To find a Hearing Aid Centre location near you, visit Costco.ca and click on locations or call 1-800-463-3783.

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Question: Do you keep putting off a visit with your doctor because you're afraid of what you might find out?

Answer: Stop worrying! Learn about the journey from the first visit to the fitting of your new hearing aid.

UNIVERSAL NEWBORN HEARING SCREENING



Prevalence of congenital hearing loss

- Permanent hearing loss is a common congenital disorder affecting 1 to 3 newborns per 1000 live births.
- The Canadian Paediatric Society recommends hearing

Importance of newborn hearing screening

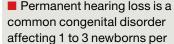
- tion of hearing loss is critical for and psychosocial development.
- associated with language and cognitive deficits.

Identifying hearing loss

- identified using oto-acoustic emission (OAE) and automated auditory brainstem response (AABR).
- AABR is particularly important for high-risk infants with a family history, or in neonatal intensive care.

- audiological testing enable early diagnosis of hearing loss before 3 months of age.
- success of UNHS programs around the world.

VICE PRESIDENT OF RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY VIVOSONIC INC. editorial@mediaplanet.com



screening for all newborns.

Early detection and interven-

- speech, language, cognitive, Delayed diagnosis is typically

in infants ■ Infants with hearing loss are

- Advanced technologies Technological advances in
- Canadian manufacturers are proudly contributing to the

ISAAC KURTZ, M.H.SC., P.ENG.



The patient journe **Understanding the** DOOR TO DOCTOR

From the hum of the C-train, to honking horns and dissonant chatter on Stephen Avenue Walk, the ins and outs of city life can be exhausting on the ears. As the world gets louder, our ears suffer, but how does one know if they have a hearing concern?

"A large percentage of people don't realize they have hearing loss," says Margaret Young, Senior Central Audiologist for Costco Hearing Aid Centres. For many, finding out one has difficulty hearing can be quite a revelation, but with advances in modern technology and proper care, adapting to the natural progression of hearing loss can be an easy life adjustment.

The journey begins with a first assessment

Whether or not you think you have a hearing loss, it is important to have your hearing tested regularly as you would with your optometrist or

"Hearing loss is easily overlooked by many. How would you know that you missed a sound if you didn't hear it in the first place?" says Young. Often the only consistent reference



Magaret Young, M.Sc. Reg. CASLPO Costco Wholesale Canada

that people seem to have is a visual one, like the volume levels shown on their TV screen. So visiting a hearing clinic for an assessment and establishing a baseline for your hearing is important.

The assessment looks at the patient's abilities to hear. It evaluates pitches and tones, the ability to hear speech, and whether or not there are any blockages or health concerns with the middle ear. These results are augmented by a discussion of the patient's family history and any noise exposure.

adjustment

At this point, the patient will be given their assessment results. "This is when a lot of information is going to come in all at the same time," says Young. "For some people, the information that they have hearing loss could be a huge surprise to them and it may be difficult to digest."

If you are a candidate for hearing aids, communication is key; you should be vocal about your needs, lifestyle, and any financial considerations you have. Additionally, Young says it's very important to establish a strong and meaningful relationship with the hearing professional throughout the process, given that both communication and the relationship will play an equal role in future care.

Re-learning to hear

As technology evolves, new hearing aid accessories become available, such as devices that connect the hearing aid with mobile phones or televisions. These advances have made communication much easier, but this isn't the end of the journey, notes Young.

"The most important thing that the patient does at this point is they adjusted and continues to work best for them.

Take the step

"Bottom line is that even though technology has advanced so much, there are a wide array of options available to candidates based on their needs," says Young, "however, the only way to benefit from these options is to take that first step and get your hearing assessed."

keep an open mind and they recogni-

ze that they have to train their ear to

hear again," she adds. "They need to be

Young says sometimes patients as-

sume hearing aids represent a quick

fix, but keeping your expectations in

check during treatment and follow-up

you can't just go and run a marathon,"

she says, "similarly, if your ear hasn't

been stimulated for a while, it takes ti-

me to adjust to the new sound levels."

need to keep the doors of communica-

tion open with their hearing professi-

onal to ensure that the hearing aid is

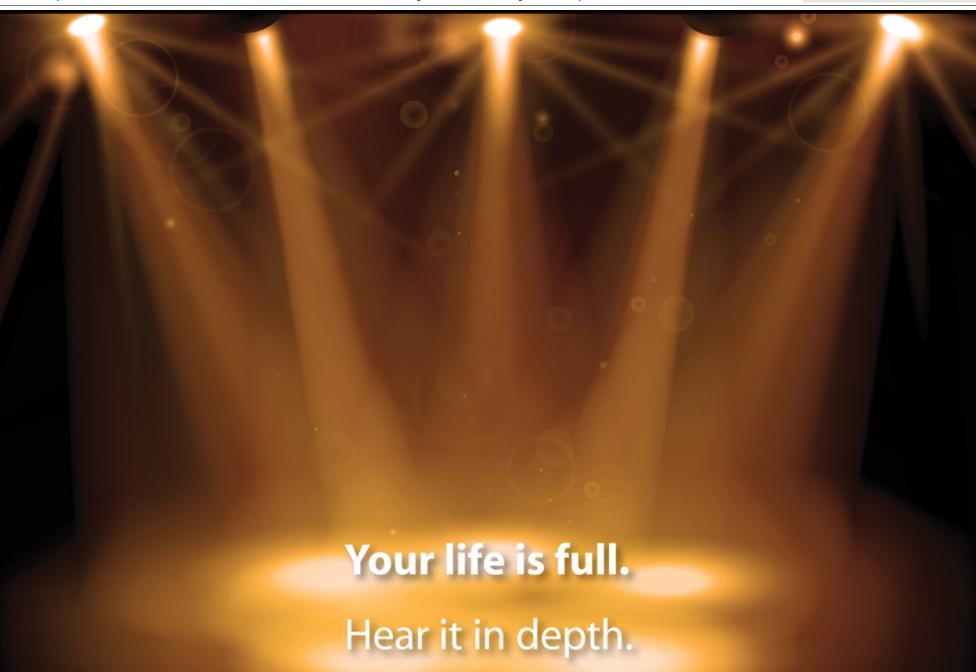
In the long term, the patient will

"If you've been inactive for a while,

committed to the process."

is also part of the process.

ANDREW SEALE editorial@mediaplanet.com



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INSPIRATION

Question: How can we bring understanding to people about hearing care? **Answer:** By focusing on awareness, education, protection and treatment, so the the world may hear.





So the world may hear

TAKING THE LEAD

Miley Cyrus and Marlee Matlin are two individuals that are true hearing aides, volunteering their time with the Starkey Hearing Foundation.

The gift of sound

During her second visit to Haiti recently and along with President of Haiti Michel Martelly, Miley Cyrus delivered the gift of hearing to 400 children and adults who have become or remained hearing impaired since the island's devastating 2010

The visit was made possible by Cyrus, after making a generous donation during the Foundation's So The World May Hear Awards Gala held on July 24, 2011. During the event's silent auction, Miley won a bid on the second hearing mission to Haiti, following her first mission there in March 2011. In addition to Miley's generous contribution to making the mission possible, Cyrus experienced some memorable moments including a visit to the President's Palace to sing to the children she fit on

"After I went on my first mission to Hai-

ti with the Starkey Hearing Foundation, I felt so drawn to helping others hear for the first time and immediately wanted to look for another chance to go back and help again," said Cyrus. "This second mission to Haiti was just as impactful to me as the first one. I grew up around music and couldn't imagine what it would be like for my siblings and me, if we couldn't hear the magic of music. It's had such an influence on my life, that I just want everyone to enjoy sound as it was intended."

Finding a good fit

Marlee Matlin also took a second trip in recent months with the foundation to Bogata, Columbia after last year heading to Africa to fit children with hearing aids and participating in the Celebrity Apprentice; the Donald Trump hosted television series in which contestants are given challenges to raise money for their charity of choice while proving their business acumen. Matlin ranked second place for the season and raised the most amount of money for her charity, the Starkey Foundation, in the show's history.

First capturing audience's heart in her Oscar winning performance as Sarah in Children of a Lesser God - an achieve-

PROFILE

The Starkey **Hearing Foundation**

The Starkev Hearing Foundation is striving to foster greater understanding among individuals and communities through hearing care by focusing on awareness, education, protection and treatment so the world may hear. Since 2000, the Foundation has supplied nearly 498,000 hearing aids to people in need and is striving to achieve its goal of distributing over one million free hearing aids in this decade. For more information on the Starkey **Hearing Founda**tion, visit www. starkeyhearing-

foundation.org.

ment made even greater by the fact that she was the youngest and only deaf actress to win the Academy Award for best actress - Marlee Matlin continues to charm and amaze audiences around the world and raise awareness for the hea-

Matlin says she can't imagine living without her hearing aid. "So when I hear of the thousands upon thousands of children who for whatever reason are unable to see a doctor, have their hearing tested or be able to buy a hearing aid, I want to reach out and help," she says. "The Starkey Hearing Foundation provides a barrier-free environment for children and adults in Third World countries and here in the United States to have their hearing tested and to get hearing aids. They are truly hearing angels."

Changing lives

This year's mission to Bogota to give 500 Colombians the gift of hearing, "was a whole new world for me," say Matiln, "but the children, like all the children I've met during my journeys with Starkey were the same; full of wonderment and unconditional love and waiting eagerly for the world to open in front of

them, thanks to Starkey." In Bogota, Marlee immediately noticed a strong sense of family and that many of the parents could sign with their children "very different from the kids I met in Africa, where many of the

Marlee spent some time with one little girl, seeing her life at home and witnessing her strength and smile as she showed her around her community.

Dare to dream

children came alone."

"In the end, I couldn't get over her and all of the children of Colombia's courage and desire to dream despite the barriers they face. It just reinforced the desire in me to make sure every deaf or hard of hearing child has a chance to realize their full potential and live a barrier free life. Thanks to Starkey, this is possible; children around the world, who might never see their dreams come true simply because they could not afford a hearing aid, can now realize their full potential."

> DANIEL DAVID SHOEMAKER editorial@mediaplanet.com



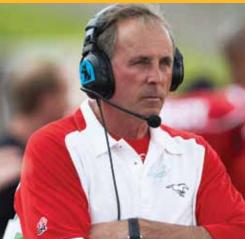


The Hearing Loss

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www.hearingloss.ca







(NIHL)?

Question 1: What are the best ways to reduce the risks of Noise-**Induced Hearing Loss**

Lisa Ballantyne, M. S., **Director of Audiology** The Hearing Loss Clinic



Dino Sophocleous, CFRE President The Hearing Foundation of



M.J. DeSousa, M.Cl.Sc., Aud. Director of Professional Connect Hearing



NIHL is caused by excessive exposure to sounds. The louder the sound, the shorter the period of time before a NIHL can occur. Any sound above 85dB can cause hearing loss. For example, a lawn mower is approximately 90dB, and this can cause hearing loss if listened to for 8 hours or more. A rock concert on the other hand may be upwards of 120dB which can cause hearing loss in less than 15 minutes. NIHL is 99 percent preventable. Your best chance of preventing a NIHL is to avoid sounds above 85 db when pos-

so available.

The best way to reduce the threat of noise-induced hearing loss is to employ some simple safe listening practices. Turn down the volume on personal music players, the TV and other electronics that can be volume-controlled. Reduce the amount of time exposed to toxic noise. When listening to music, over-theear headphones are less dangerous than earbuds. In situations where volume and time cannot be controlled, stand as far back from the source of noise as possible, and give ears frequent breaks from the onslaught. Finally, whenever possible, wear hearing protection such as earplugs or over-the-ear devices.

Awareness. Consider your "daily noise dose". To prevent NIHL, level and duration of noise and the amount of noisefree "rest" matters. Be aware of all of the sources of noise you encounter throughout the day. If you have encountered a significant amount of noise, give your ears a rest by spending some time in quiet. If you listen to music through headphones, set the volume so you can hear someone speaking to you from 3 feet away. If your favourite song comes on turn it up a little but don't forget to turn it back down.

Question 2: From your perspective, what are the leading causes of Noise-Induced **Hearing Loss?**

The most common cause of NIHL in teens and young adults is personal stereos, music at school dances, and loud music concerts. For adults, the most at-risk individuals are heavy machinery operators, construction workers, military personnel, and musicians. Other sources of noise may include snowmobiles, ATV's and firearms.

sible. If this is not an option, then wear

earplugs or industrial earmuffs. Custom

ear plugs and musicians earplugs are al-

Noise is everywhere and it's difficult to escape. Industrial noise is a major cause of NIHL, and Canada has many laws in place requiring workplace safety to protect hearing. However, many situations such as leisure environments are not covered by such laws, including movie theatres, retail stores, dance clubs and concerts. One of the main causes of NIHL is listening to music on personal music players at high volumes and for long periods of time. Reducing noise in all areas of our lives is essential to promote healthy living and healthy hearing.

The leading causes of NIHL are changing. Today, we are seeing more NIHL due to recreational noise. For example, imagine "Holly" who gets up in the morning and uses her hair dryer, leaves her house wearing an MP3 player, turns up the volume while on the bus, she continues to listen to her MP3 player at work for much of the day. She goes to the gym for a Zumba class then goes out clubbing with friends. Holly has definitely exceeded her maximum daily noise dose and is putting herself at risk for NIHL.

Question 3: Who is affected by Noise-**Induced Hearing Loss?**

People of all ages can develop an NIHL, including children, young adults, adults, and seniors. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, "an estimated 12.5 percent of children and adolescents aged 6 - 19 years, and 17 percent of adults aged 20 - 69 years have suffered permanent damage to their hearing from excessive exposure to noise.

Everyone. People of all ages can acquire some degree of NIHL. Our first consideration, however, must be our children who are exposed to loud sounds at an earlier age than any previous generation. Their leisure activities, school environments and their music-listening habits have created a dangerous breeding ground for NIHL.

Everyone is at risk for NIHL. We live in a noisy world. As you go through your day, are there situations where you have to raise your voice to be heard over the noise? Some examples include; hair dryers, MP3 players, cars (especially driving with the windows open), lawn mowers, weed eaters, motorcycles, fitness classes, movie theatres, subways, walking on a busy street next to traffic etc. If you find yourself in noisy situations like these consistently, you are at risk for NIHL.



DO YOU EXPERIENCE 'RINGING' IN YOUR EARS?

You're not alone!

▶ There are over 300,000 Canadians, like you who experience tinnitus - sound or noise that is heard with no external sound source.

Zen, a revolutionary harmonic sound program, unique to Widex hearing aids, has been clinically proven* to help users relax, concentrate and manage the effects of tinnitus.

Since using the Zen programs I feel that my tinnitus has decreased in loudness even when I take the hearing aids out.'

Visit widex.ca for more information on Zen and find a hearing health professional near you.













The Golden Ears

- Question: Do you notice communication with your family and friends is becoming more difficult?
- Answer: it may be time to pay a visit to your audiologist to get your hearing tested.

THE EFFECTS OF AGEING ON HEARING

Hearing loss caries many physical and psychological effects, especially due to our inherent social nature.

More than 25 percent of all hearing loss can be attributed to ageing, according to the Hearing Foundation of Canada.

MJ DeSousa - Connect Hearing's director of professional practice says two out of three Canadians over the age of 70 experience acquired hearing loss.

Psychological effects

"As hearing loss deepens, this can lead to social isolation and can cause loneliness, anxiety, relationship breakdown, and even depression," says DeSousa.

Jean Holden, executive director of the Canadian Academy of Audiology, points out that since communication is such an important part of day-to-day life, the psychological effects run deep.

"Sometimes an older person who has lost the ability to hear and has not learned other ways to communicate effectively 'appears' to be disconnected, disinterested or worse, mentally incompetent," she says. "It is important to ensure that hearing aids are working and overall hearing healthcare needs (e.g. checking for ear wax) are managed."

Making it a top priority

The good news is, as the Canadian population grows, the technology to

reprimand hearing concerns.

"Hearing loss in ageing adults is a top priority in Canada," says DeSou-

Nora McKlellin, President of the B.C. chapter of The Canadian Hard of Hearing Association, recommends those experiencing hearing loss should join an organization.

"They should be aware that whatever they're going through, they're not alone," says McKlellin.

Improved communication

Hearing aids and hand-held amplification systems can help improve communication between those

- They may prefer the volume on the TV, radio etc. be louder than
- They might become impatient,
- They may feel like the people

who are hard of hearing and those who aren't.

"Making sure the room is quiet and asking friends and family to talk in front of you can help with communication," says McLellin. "(It's about) Being comfortable with yourself and knowing how to make other people aware of the best way to communicate with you.".

And even if the effects of ageing aren't affecting your hearing ability, DeSousa recommends you follow up with regular check-ups.

Stay vigilent

"If your hearing is good and you aren't experiencing any communication difficulties by age 50, I recommend getting your hearing tested every 2 years until the age of 70 when this should increase to a yearly test," says DeSousa. "If you do have hearing loss, then you should be getting it tested at least once per year or sooner if you feel it has changed or you are experiencing increased communication difficulties."

> ANDREW SEALE editorial@mediaplanet.com

WHO PROVIDES HEARING HEALTH-CARE?

Otolaryngologist (ENT doc-

An Otolaryngologist is a surgeon who specializes in the diagnosis, management and treatment of diseases and conditions of the ear, nose, throat (ENT) and structures of the head and neck. An ENT doctor can manage conditions such as abnormalities in the outer ear canals or the middle ear bones, ear infections, rare tumours on the hearing and balance nerves and would be the doctor to perform cochlear implant surgery.

Audiologists and Hearing Instrument Practitioners (HIPs)

Variability exists in regulations governing the dispensing of hearing aids across Canada, therefore specific information for each province or territory should be sought.

HIPs include Hearing Instrument Specialist H.I.S and Hearing Instrument Dispensers H.I.D and generally hold a 2-3 year diploma from a college or university. They must complete 1000 hours Internship and successfully complete the International Licensing Exam. They learn assessment of, care for, and dispensing of hearing aids and ALDs to adults. HIPs provide communication strategies and counsel on how to manage hearing loss. A Hearing Instrument Dispenser H.I.D. performs all the function noted with the exception of hearing testing and assessment.

Audiologists in Canada have a masters and/or doctoral degree(s) in communication sciences and disorders. Aside from assessing and managing hearing loss, Audiology training includes specialty areas such as assessing cochlear implant candidacy and post surgical device management. They also use special techniques to assess young children and fit hearing devices on infants and children through to adulthood. They help people manage ringing/buzzing in the ear (tinnitus), balance disorders related to the inner ear and when sounds are not being processed correctly by the nerves and brain (auditory processing disorder). Audiologists also provide counseling for the entire family on living well with hearing related conditions.

Victoria Lee Au.D., RAUD, RHIP **Registered Audiologist & Registered Hearing Instrument Practitioner**

> Fellow AAA, Cert ASHA President of the Canadian Academy of Audiology editorial@mediaplanet.com

There are many subtle and

COMMON SIGNS

obvious signs that a senior might be experiencing hearing

The following is a list of a few common traits.

- A senior may frequently ask for repetition when you're communicating with them.
- They may have a tendency to avoid noisy rooms, social occasions and family gatherings
- others who are watching
- They might experience difficulty hearing at movies, theatres and places of worship or hearing conversations in small groups
- irritable, withdrawn, or frustrated when it comes to communication
- around them are mumbling

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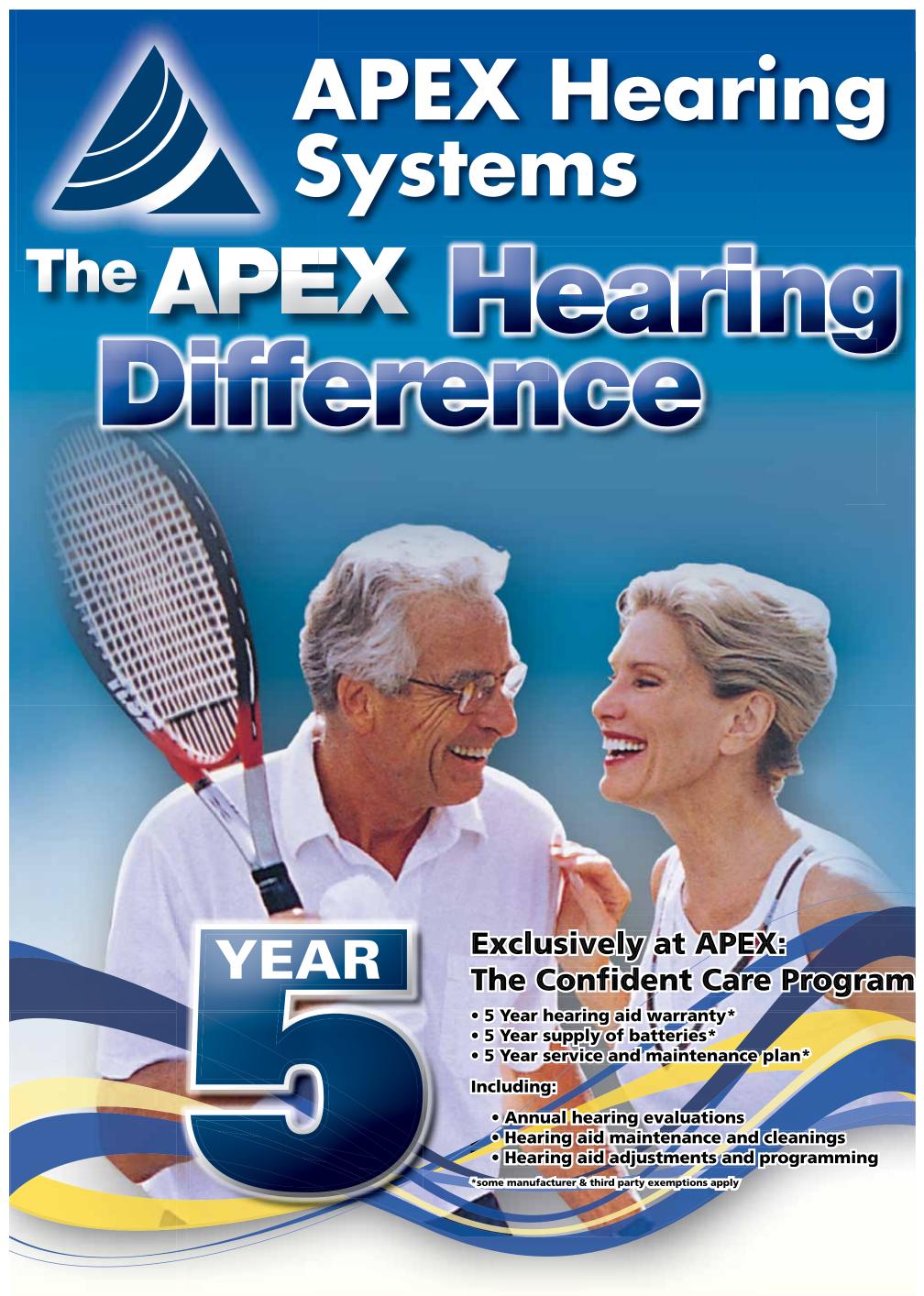
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