AN INDEPENDENT SECTION BY MEDIAPLANET TO THE VANCOUVER SUN



What to Expect Learn about the patient journey



Age Related Factors What to expect in the "golden years"



May 2012

HEARING HEALTH



SO THE WORLD MAY HEAR

Read about Miley Cyrus and Marlee Matlin,

two true hearing aides and their work helping children around the world to hear

CHALLENGES



Pay attention to your hearing health and **look to professionals if** you have hearing concerns.

Learn about hearing loss

bu're having lunch with your daughter at her favourite eatery. As usual, it's crowded and loud. Annoying pop music drones in the background.Beside

you, the waitress is rattling off the specials but you can't hear a word she says. Your daughter leans in to ask you a question.All you can think is, "Why do young people always talk so fast?" Lately, you realize you've been saying, "what" and "pardon me" a lot. Could it be that you're losing some of your hearing? You are certainly not alone. Statistics Canada projects that by 2026, nearly 1 in 4 Canadians will be seniors. By then, most people will either be experiencing hearing loss themselves or know of someone who is.



who is a university-trained clinician specializing in hearing science and hearing loss difficulties. If required, an amplification device such as a hearing aid may be recommended.

Do hearing aids really work?

Unlike prescription eyeglasses, hearing aids are not corrective devices and cannot restore your hearing to 100%. They are really just "aids". However, with a properly fitted aid, most people will notice an improvement in overall speech understanding in everyday listening environments. Today's hearing aids vary from basic to advanced digital technology. The more advanced the hearing aid, the more effective at controlling background noise. When hearing aids are coupled with good communication strategies, a person can learn to cope a lot easier in challenging listening environments.

variety of colours so that your hearing aid will blend in with your hair colour or look smart like a high tech device.

How much do hearing aids cost?

Hearing aids typically range in cost between \$1000 and \$4000 per hearing aid, depending on the level of technology and size of the hearing aid. Hearing aids

are not covered by the BC Medical Plan.



WE RECOMMEND



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

"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.

MEDIA PLANET

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What are the first signs of hearing loss?

You frequently ask people to repeat
You say "pardon me?" or "what?" a lot
You have difficulty hearing in noisy environments such as restaurants or parties

Vou think most people are mumbling

Grace Shyng, M.Sc., Aud. (C), RAUD, RHIP Head of Audiology Western Institute for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

■ You are turning up the volume on the TV, radio or telephone

What if you suspect you have hearing loss?

Have your hearing tested by a hearing professional, such as an Audiologist,

Regulating healthcare in British Columbia

Do hearing aids still look like the ones my grandmother used to wear?

Not at all.Today's hearing aids have attractive modern designs that shape well into or over your ear and come in a wide ty medical coverage, you may have access to some funding assistance. Some clinics such as the Western Institute for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, also offer a low cost, refurbished hearing aid program.

What if I leave my hearing loss untreated?

Hearing loss is often described as an invisible handicap in which people delay seeking help. And many people often fake or bluff during conversations when they can't hear. Left untreated, hearing loss can lead to feelings of loneliness, isolation and depression.

If you suspect you have hearing loss, or know someone who might, obtain a baseline hearing assessment. **Photo Credit:** All images are from iStock.com unless otherwise accredited.

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EAR FACTS!



The Ministry of Health enacted the Health Professions Act of British Columbia (HPA) in 1996. Since then, other acts, such as the Medical Practitioners Act and the Hearing Aid Act, have been repealed so that Physicians, Hearing Instrument Practitioners, and other health professionals are now regulated under the same Act, namely, the HPA.

Each and every health regulator's number one priority is to protect the public. The vast majority of health care professionals are regulated because the government of British Columbia wants to ensure that health professionals who serve the public meet specific standards and their credentials have been verified to be accurate.

The College of Speech and Hearing Health Professionals of BC sets standards for health professionals who practice in one or more of three professions: Audiology, Speech-Language Pathology and Hearing Instrument Dispensing.

Professional proof

British Columbia is unique in Canada because anyone who wishes to dispense hearing aids must meet certain requirements in order to use the title "Hearing Instrument Practitioner," also referred to as HIPs. In BC, Audiologists must also meet the requirements to be considered a HIP. Therefore, before purchasing any hearing aid device, ensure the person is registered with this college as a "Hearing Instrument Practitioner." You may do so by asking the person for proof of registration or by using the Registry posted on our website www.cshhpbc. org. The Registry lists all professionals, their title, place of business, and their classification.

Doctor's orders

The other unique aspect of health re-

gulation in BC is the "restricted activity" model. Restricted activities are deemed by the Ministry of Health to be harmful to people if not performed correctly, therefore health professionals must meet additional requirements in order to perform these activites. Each "restricted activity" requires an Advanced Competency Certificate. Professionals who hold an Advanced Competency Certificate, such as Cererum Management (removal of wax from the ear canal), are also identified on the Registry.

The Advanced Competency Certificates issued by the College of Speech and Hearing Health Professionals of BC for hearing are: Cererum Management (ear wax removal), Vestibular Assessment and Management (dizziness or loss of balance), and Cochlear Implant Management (for severe to profound hearing loss).

In British Columbia there are approximately:

364 Active Hearing Instrument Prac-

titioners, of whom 183 are also Audiologists,

241 Audiologists

959 Speech-Language Pathologists Should you have any concerns about the practice of a health professional regulated in BC, you have the right to make your concern known to the appropriate college. Complaints concerning the practice of an Audiologist, Hearing Instrument Practitioner, or Speech-Language Pathologist must be made in writing (via email, fax, or post) to the attention of the Registrar, College of Speech and Hearing Health Professionals of BC. Contact information is available on the college website: www.cshhpbc.org

> DIANE O'CONNOR Registrar and Executive Director, College of Speech and Hearing Health Professionals of BC editorial@mediaplanet.com

■ 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 Qtips 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.

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



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

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

across Canada), the centres offer a comprehensive hearing 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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*Optional BLU RCU or Mini BLU RCU required for Bluetooth® connectivity.

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(actual size)





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INTERESTED IN A CAREER AS A HEARING PROFESSIONAL?

Audiologist

Accredited master's degree in Audiology such as the UBC Masters Degree program www.ubc.ca (Full Time, B.Sc prerequisite).

Other graduation programs are offered by: University of Western Ontario, University of Ottawa, University of Montreal, and Dalhousie University.

• Other requirements such as clinical hours, entitlement to work in Canada and the CASLPA exam are outlined in the College of Speech and Hearing Health Professionals of BC bylaws, section 85, accessible on the college website www.cshhpbc.org

Hearing Instrument Practitioner

Non-Audiologists interested in this career require two years post-secondary education plus a hearing aid course provided by one of the following:

- IHS www.ihsinfo.org
- Grant MacEwan University (Alberta) www.macewan.ca/hearingaid;
- George Brown College (Ontario) www.gbrownc.on.ca;
- Conestoga College (Ontario) www.conestogac.on.ca
- Rosemont College (Quebec)

A practicum of 840 hours is required under the supervision of an approved Hearing Instrument Practitioner by the College of Speech and Hearing Health Professionals of BC.

If interested, please visit the College website www.cshhpbc.org to review the Guidelines for HIP Students posed under the Publications tab.

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An audiologist is the primary health care professional who evaluates, treats, and guides you and your family to manage hearing loss and balance disorders.

To find an audiologist: www.canadianaudiology.ca/consumer



SPIRATION

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

 \bigcirc

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 screening for all newborns.

Importance of newborn hearing screening

■ Early detection and intervention of hearing loss is critical for speech, language, cognitive, and psychosocial development.

Delayed diagnosis is typically associated with language and cognitive deficits.

Identifying hearing loss in infants

■ Infants with hearing loss are 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.

> ISAAC KURTZ, M.H.SC., P.ENG. VICE PRESIDENT OF RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY VIVOSONIC INC. editorial@mediaplanet.com

The patient journey

DOOR TO DOCTOR

HIRTY-SEVEN

ONLY MINIMA HEARING LOS FAIL AT LEAS ONE GRADE

From the hum of the Skytrain, to honking horns and dissonant chatter in Gastown, the ins-and-outs of city life can be exhausting on the ears. As the world gets louder, our ears suffer but how do you know if you have a hearing issue?

"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 hearing loss, it is important to have your hearing tested regularly as you would with your optometrist or dentist.

"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 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 es-



Magaret Young, M.Sc. Reg. CASLPO Senior Central Audiologist, Costco Wholesale Canada

tablishing 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.

Understanding the 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 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.

Some things to be aware of in BC are the effects of moisture and humidity on hearing aid electronics. "Those things can cause a hearing aid to become intermittent," says Young. She says manufacturers have picked up on the concerns and developed moisture resistant coatings.

"The most important thing that the patient can do at this point is to keep an open mind and recognize that they have to train their ear to hear again," she adds. "They need to be committed to the process."

Young says sometimes patients assume hearing aids represent a quick fix, but keeping your expectations in check during treatment and follow-up is also part of the process.

"If you've been inactive for a while, you can't just go and run a marathon," she says. "Similarly, if your ear hasn't been stimulated for a while, it takes time to adjust to the new sound levels."

In the long term, the patient will need to keep the doors of communication open with their hearing professional to ensure that the hearing aid is 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."



ANDREW SEALE editorial@mediaplanet.com

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

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 Canadian Academy of Audiology.

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 over-the-ear headphones with active noise cancellation.)

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 exposed.

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 to 96 dBA it is only safe for 1 hour. In this study we measured the maximum level achieved "People using earbuds have a shorter time window to listen to their devices before they run the risk of hearing damage."

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% 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 music, even if we didn't want to.

Most headphone users are not abusers.

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

Now you know!

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 noise-cancelling 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

INSPIRATION

MEDIA PLANET

Question: How can we bring understanding to people about hearing care?

Answer: By focusing on awareness, education, protection and treatment, so the world may hear.





So the world may with the Starkey Hearing Foundation, I felt so

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 earthquake.

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 her first visit.

"After I went on my first mission to Haiti

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

PROFILE **The Starkey**

Hearing Foundation

The Starkey 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 Foundation** visit www.starkeyhearingfoundation. org.

of a Lesser God - an achievement 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 hearing impaired.

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 children came alone."

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

"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

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Question 1:

ring Loss (NIHL)?

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



Awareness. Consider your "daily noise dose." To prevent NIHL, level and duration of noise and the amount of noise-free "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.

Dino Sophocleous, CFRE President The Hearing Foundation of Canada

The best way to reduce the threat of noise-induced hearing loss is to employ some safe listening practices. Turn down th me on personal music players, the TV a er electronics that can be volume-con Reduce the amount of time exposed t noise. When listening to music, overheadphones are less dangerous than e In situations where volume and time be controlled, stand as far back from th ce of noise as possible, and give ears fr breaks from the onslaught. Finally, wh possible, wear hearing protection such plugs or over-the-ear devices.

Bill Hodgetts, Phd Associate Professor, Department of Speech Pathology and Audiology, University of Alberta, Board member of CAA

Awareness. Most people don't think that noi-



e simple ne volu- ind oth- ntrolled. to toxic the-ear earbuds. cannot ne sour- requent nenever n as ear-	se exposure is a risk to them. You see people wearing safety goggles and hard hats becau- se they know that a piece of wood in the eye, or a blow to the head, will cause damage. Our ears don't bleed, so people tend not to con- cern themselves with NIHL (often until it is too late). Increased awareness can lead people to avoid noisy situations, or better yet, bring inexpensive hearing protection with them so they can still have fun without damaging their hearing.
to esca-	Many people fail to recognize that leisure ac-
of NIHL,	tivities are a leading cause of NIHL. As an ex-

Question 2:

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

What are the best ways to reduce

the risks of Noise-Induced Hea-

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.

Noise is everywhere and it's difficult pe. Industrial noise is a major cause of 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.

ample, when the Oilers made it to the Stanley Cup Playoffs in 2006 we sent a few people to the game wearing a noise dosimeter. We found that these individuals were reaching their maximum allowable daily noise dose in only 6 min in that environment. Vancouver fans no doubt experienced the same types of exposures last year. Just because it's fun, doesn't mean you shouldn't be thinking about your delicate ears.

Question 3:

Who is affected by Noise-Induced Hearing Loss?

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.

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.

All ears are susceptible to noise. As we age we become less tolerant of noisy environments. Aging leads to hearing loss, which leads to poorer hearing in noisey environments. So the older we get the more we tend to avoid noisy environments. There is a big push to educate young people about NIHL. Listening to iPods, going to clubs, riding ATVs are all fun. Nobody is saying you can't do these things, just be aware that there are risks and learn to guard against them (turn it down, wear earplugs etc.)



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.

& Henderson Sabes (2010) 'Zen as a Sound Stimulator & for Relaxation' JAAA

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www.widhh.ca

* Registered Audiologists and UBC Clinical Instructors

AN INDEPENDENT SECTION BY MEDIAPLANET TO THE VANCOUVER SUN

Question: Do you now notice

friends is becoming more difficult?

Answer: If so, it may be time to

THE EFFECTS OF AGEING

Hearing loss caries many physical and

psychological effects, especially due to

More than 25 percent of all hearing

loss can be attributed to agening, accor-

ding to the Hearing Foundation of Ca-

MJ DeSousa - Connect Hearing's di-

rector of professional practice - says two

out of three Canadians over the age of 70

"As hearing loss deepens, this can lead

to social isolation and can cause loneli-

ness, anxiety, relationship breakdown,

Jean Holden, executive director of the

Canadian Academy of Audiology, points

out that since communication is such

and even depression," says DeSousa.

experience acquired hearing loss.

Psychological effects

your hearing tested

ON HEARING

nada.

our inherent social nature.

pay a visit to your audiologist to get

communication with your family and





WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES **BETWEEN THE PROFESSIONS?**

The Ministry of Health in British Columbia has defined the professions regulated by the College of Speech and Hearing Health Professionals as:

Audiology is the health profession in which a person provides, for the purposes of promoting and maintaining communicative, auditory and vestibular health, the services of assessment, treatment, rehabilitation and prevention of:

auditory and related communication disorders and conditions

peripheral and central auditory system dysfunction and related peripheral and central vestibular system dysfunction

Hearing Instrument Dispensing

is the health profession in which a person provides the services of:

assessment of hearing using an audiometer, or other methods, to identify hearing loss

recommending, selecting, preparing, altering, adapting, verifying, selling and offering to sell hearing instruments

Speech-Language Pathology is

the health profession in which a person provides, for the purposes of promoting and maintaining communicative health, the services of assessment, treatment, rehabilitation and prevention of:

speech, language and related communication disorders and conditions vocal tract dysfunction, including related feeding and swallowing disorders

> **DIANE O'CONNOR Registrar & Executive Director, College of Speech and Hearing Health Professionals of BC** editorial@mediaplanet.com

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There are many subtle and obvious signs that a senior might be experiencing hearing loss. The following is a list of a few common

an important part of day-to-day life, the

"Sometimes an older person who

has lost the ability to hear and has not

learned other ways to communicate ef-

fectively 'appears' to be disconnected,

disinterested or worse, mentally incom-

petent," she says. "It is important to en-

sure that hearing aids are working and

overall hearing healthcare needs (e.g.

checking for ear wax) are managed."

psychological effects run deep.

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

They may prefer the volume on the

DOES

"Hearing loss in ageing adults is a top priority in Canada," says DeSousa.

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 commincation

Hearing aids and hand-held amplification systems can help improve communication between those who are hard of hearing and those who aren't.

TV, radio etc. be louder than others who are watching

- They might experience difficulty hearing at movies, theatres and places of worship or hearing conversations in small groups
- They might become impatient, irritable, withdrawn, or frustrated when it comes to communication
- They may feel like the people
- around them are mumbling

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."

"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 com-

fortable with yourself and knowing how

to make other people aware of the best

And even if the effects of ageing aren't

affecting your hearing ability, DeSousa

recommends you follow up with regular

way to communicate with you.".



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