

Be aware

The latest in hearing loss technology

Be informed

The link between hearing loss and dementia

Be proactive

Urging readers to take a stand

**MEDIA
PLANET**

May 2011

AUDIOLOGY

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TIPS

LIFE WITHOUT LIMITS

How **Josh Hembrough**, 110-meter Hurdles World Record Holder in the Deaflympics, doesn't let his deafness hold him back

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CHALLENGES

Historically, hearing loss has put limits on our **acquisition of speech and language**, our ability to participate in relationships in the “hearing” world, and has even limited our earning potential.

A changing and evolving field

Advancements in early diagnosis and the multitude of hearing loss treatment options have freed both the deaf and hearing-impaired from the worst of these restrictions.

Today, universal hearing screening at birth is catching babies with hearing loss, so they can be treated before their critical speech and language acquisition years. Children and adults with deafness are now joining the hearing world through cochlear implant surgery. Those with hearing impairment are closing the communication

and earnings gaps with modern hearing aids. In their 2010 study to document the direct correlation between income loss and hearing loss, the Better Hearing Institute showed that the use of hearing aids restores lost income by about 50 percent. In addition to removing income limits, today's hearing technology can now effectively treat the multitude of types of hearing loss and fit in well with today's active lifestyles.

New advancements

“We have so many outstanding treatment choices today,” reports Dr. Bruce Vircks, president of the Academy of Doctors of Audiology,



Dr. Bruce Vircks, Au.D.
President,
Academy of
Doctors of
Audiology

“These advances come just in time for the wave of tech-savvy, quality-of-life oriented baby boomers that are just turning 65 this year.”

a national member organization of audiology practice owners and managers. Hearing aids now come in all shapes and sizes. Some you can wear 24/7 for months, some connect wirelessly to your cell phone and television, and all are customized to create a high-quality experience. These advances come just in time for the wave of tech-savvy, quality-of-life oriented baby boomers that are just turning 65 this year. The old problems of comfort, cosmetics, moisture and feedback have been largely resolved with lighter, smaller devices, nano-coating and advanced electronics. Pretty soon it's going to be hip to wear hearing aids!

TIP

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ERASE THE
STIGMAS

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NEWS

WHAT IS A COCHLEAR IMPLANT?

A cochlear implant is a small electronic device that allows children and adults with severe to profound sensorineural hearing loss, often referred to incorrectly as “nerve deafness,” to access the world of sound.

A cochlear implant mimics the natural hearing function of the inner ear and allows those who meet criteria to basically ‘hear’ at normal levels.

There is a general misconception that sensorineural hearing loss means the hearing nerve is damaged, this is why some people incorrectly refer to this type of loss as “nerve deafness.” This is typically not the case. Most often people who have been told they have nerve deafness actually suffer from damage to the inner ear or cochlea, not the hearing nerve. This is an important distinction as a cochlear implant bypasses the damaged part of the ear and stimulates the hearing nerve directly. This is quite different from hearing aids which basically increase the volume.

Unfortunately, making sounds louder does not necessarily make them clearer—people with severe to profound hearing loss may hear sound with hearing aids but still experience great difficulty understanding speech. For some people with severe to profound hearing loss, using a hearing aid can be likened to listening to a loud, badly tuned radio. You experience fragments of



Dana L. Suskind, MD
Director of the Cochlear Implant Center, University of Chicago UCMC & Comer Children's Hospital

“...this story highlights how important it is that we get the message out that cochlear implants are an important option once hearing aids no longer benefit!”

the program; it is loud, but not clear. It is really the direct stimulation of the hearing nerve by the cochlear implant which allows for ‘clarity’ of sound and the outstanding performance we routinely see with today’s cochlear implant technology.

Who can benefit?

Children with profound hearing loss as young as 12 months of age may be considered candidates, and older children greater than two years with severe to profound hearing loss may be considered a candidate. There is no upper age limit. We are implanting patients well into their nineties as long as they are medically able to undergo a straight forward outpatient surgical procedure under general anesthesia. The bottom line for children is the

earlier the better! The reason for this is something called the ‘critical language period’ which means that because children are programmed early on to learn spoken language, it becomes increasingly more difficult as they get older.

An incredibly important issue to highlight is that only a small fraction of the individuals who could benefit from this technology are actually receiving it. Of approximately 1.2 to 1.5 million people in this country who could potentially receive benefits, only five percent are receiving cochlear implantation. Approximately 42,600 US adults and 28,400 children have received cochlear implants thus far according to the FDA. We need to get the word out!

I recently had a wonderful 84 year old woman who had completely lost her hearing about a year ago and the only way I could communicate with her was by writing everything down. This wonderful woman felt incredibly isolated from friends and family and thus had decided to go forward with a cochlear implant. The amazing part of the story was how she heard about cochlear implantation—it wasn’t her doctor, her audiologist, or even her ENT—it was a Ladies Home Journal article! This story highlights how important it is that we get the message out that cochlear implants are an important option once hearing aids no longer benefit!

For more information:

See graph on page 8.

My hearing was restored with a cochlear implant!

“My hearing aids were no longer enough. Guided by my Audiologist, I decided it was time for a cochlear implant!”

SUZANNE L. –
Cochlear™ Nucleus®
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Hear now. And always



INSPIRATION

Question: Does deafness limit what I can achieve?

Answer: Josh Hembrough proves that heart and determination combined with the latest in hearing technology allows one to conquer any disability.

Hembrough equals hurdles

HOW I MADE IT

Josh Hembrough was looking down the lane during the finals of the 110m hurdles during the 2009 Summer Deaflympics and his nerves were already at an all-time high.

To his right was the world-record holder in the hurdles from Latvia. The field had already false-started twice. If there were a third false start, whoever did so would be disqualified. This was not the beginning Hembrough had in mind.

This Grand Rapids, Mich. native has

been a hurdler since high school where he won the 2007 Gatorade Player of the Year and broke the national high school record for the 60m hurdles.

A memorable night

With his incredible speed and his height (6'5"), Hembrough has successfully won the Big 10 championships every year since his freshman year at Purdue University. Now a senior for the Boilermakers, Hembrough is aiming for his fourth Big 10 championship and for All-American status.

The strobe light went off in Taipei and off Hembrough went. He matched



"By the time he cleared the last hurdle and cleared the finish line, he was the new Deaflympic world record holder."

stride for stride against the Latvian. With his stare down the lane, Hembrough could have burned a hole through all of the hurdles. Slowly, he started to get ahead of his closest competitor and by the time he cleared the last hurdle and crossed the finish line, he was the new Deaflympic world record holder: 14.10 seconds.

Looking back, Hembrough admits that the two false starts had an effect on how he launched from the blocks, but winning gold was the best thing that could have happened. Since that memorable night, Hembrough has lowered his personal record to 14.04.


Greater heights

Hembrough wears bilateral cochlear implants while competing for Purdue, but due to Deaflympic regulations, he cannot wear his implants while competing for the United States. That doesn't stop him from blazing to greater heights in the hurdling world.

To read more inspiring stories like Josh's, visit www.usdeafsports.org.

CHRIS KAFTAN

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INSPIRATION

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RISE TO
GREATER
HEIGHTS



OVERCOMING HURDLES
Josh Hembrough at the
2009 Deaflympics.
PHOTO: JASON CHIOU / US DEAFLYMPICS

NEWS

Those with even mild hearing loss are twice as likely to develop dementia.
When was the last time you got your hearing checked?

TIP

3

FIND YOUR
SOLUTION

CAN HEARING LOSS CAUSE DEMENTIA?

We are determined to stay as vital and active as possible as we get older. We get our cholesterol and blood pressure checked to prevent heart disease. We see the dentist regularly to prevent tooth decay and gingivitis. We endure mammograms or prostrate exams to prevent cancer. But when was the last time you checked your hearing? Chances are, not since grade school. Hearing loss is so gradual and subtle that we usually just ignore and forget about it.

hearing loss and memory

You can no longer afford to ignore your hearing. You need to check your hearing to save your memory and prevent dementia.

In our practice, we have long observed the relationship between hearing loss and memory. As hearing gets worse, so does memory. After all, how can you remember something if you didn't hear it to begin with?

A recent study at Johns Hopkins University discovered that even those with a mild hearing loss are twice as likely to develop dementia. The risk of dementia increases five fold in those with moderate hearing loss if left untreated.

One study found that 83 percent of patients diagnosed with dementia also had hearing loss.



Dr. Ronna Fisher, Au.D., FAAA
President and Founder, Hearing Health Center

"As hearing gets worse, so does memory. After all, how can you remember something if you didn't hear it to begin with?"

Dr. Frank Lin, the lead researcher at Johns Hopkins theorizes that the stress of trying so hard to listen may exasperate the brain of those with hearing loss. Information is not transferred to memory. "The brain might have to reallocate resources to help with hearing at the expense of cognition," says Dr. Lin.

Protect yourself

The good news is that hearing aids, the only current treatment for 95 percent of all hearing loss, can impede the advancement of dementia and actually reverse the progression. The National Council on Aging found significant improvement not only in memory, but also in the behavior, relationships, mental health and social

life of those who corrected their hearing. Hearing aids stimulate the auditory centers of the brain required for memory and can boost cognitive function 50 percent within a year.

The message to baby boomers is clear. You routinely take tests to protect yourself from illness and disease. Now you should get a hearing test to protect yourself from dementia.

A baseline-hearing test takes 15 to 20 minutes. Regular monitoring will determine any change or deterioration so preventative measures can be implemented. Early hearing loss can be detected and treated before it is too late.

It's time to make an appointment to have a hearing test...before you forget you need one!

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INSIGHT

Advanced technologies

**Helen Keller once said:
“Blindness separates us
from things but deafness
separates us from people.”**

In reality, even a mild amount of hearing loss can separate us from people and keep us from doing the things that bring us joy. Hearing aids and other hearing assistive devices (e.g., amplified telephones, smoke alarms, remote microphones, etc.) connect us to the world in which we live and these technologies allow individuals with hearing loss to remain engaged, employed and empowered.

Hearing the difference

Hearing aids are more than just amplifiers. Because of the collaborative efforts of researchers, scientists, engineers, information technology specialists and others, hearing aids are smarter and more effective in ameliorating hearing loss for children and adults alike.

Through the use of wireless



Dr. Therese Walden, Au.D.
President-Elect,
American Academy
of Audiology

technology, hearing aids can be connected to smart phones, computers, MP3 players and televisions. Many hearing aids have multiple microphones which allows for improved hearing in background noise. They also have digital noise reduction and other signal processing used to manipulate the incoming sound and shape it for the user so that their world sounds clearer, more distinct and definitely more connected.

The use of a simple induction coil which comes built into many hearing aids allows individuals to hear more clearly on land-line phones and those very same induction coils can help link individuals with hearing loss to audio-loops that have been installed in meeting rooms, auditoriums, places of

worship, etc. Sound is broadcast over the public address system directly to the hearing aid.

Staying connected

Effective hearing is more than getting sound into the ear: we hear with our brain. We connect to our world because of the wonderfully complex auditory system that starts with our ears but ends in our brains. Because of this, hearing aids and other hearing assistive technology are but a component of an overall treatment and management plan. Under the guidance of an audiologist, individuals with hearing loss can learn how to integrate any or all of the hearing loss treatment devices into their lifestyle.

The hearing aids and hearing assistive technology of today will go a long way in helping you or someone you love gain independence, connect with people and live a *life without limits*...you just need to take the first step and contact an audiologist to get started!



QUIET YOUR ENVIRONMENT—NOT JUST THE VOLUME



RICHARD REED doesn't just love music, he lives it. For much of his life, music has been a constant presence and passion. Richard is a cochlear implant user.
PHOTO: NAME SURNAME



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While successive generations continue the eternal debate regarding which music deserves to be called “music” rather than just “noise,” the stark reality is that there is no substantial difference when it comes to the damage both can inflict upon our sense of hearing.

While growing concern has finally begun to materialize regarding the now pervasive use of portable listening devices, we often fail to acknowledge that spending time in loud environments can be equally harmful. A recent study of the listening habits of one hundred college students conducted by audiologists Brian Fligor (Children’s Hospital/Harvard Medical School) and Terri Ives (PCO School of Audiology) indicated that only six percent of participants turned their MP3 players to risky sound

levels when they were in a quiet environment; however, in a noisy environment, 80 percent turned up the music to risky levels.

According to audiologist Michael Santucci, the founder of Sensaphonics Hearing Conservation, a research and development company committed to controlling the damaging effects of loud sound, “when using portable listening devices, you should seek out quieter listening areas and use in-the-ear earphones that block out background noise to help keep the levels down. Hi fidelity earplugs should be worn at concerts and dance clubs. Most importantly, check your hearing on a regular basis to monitor any changes from loud music exposure.”

MAX FRIEND

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PANEL OF EXPERTS

	<div>Dr. Bary Williams, Au.D. Industry Expert and Consultant</div>	<div>Jeff Dittmer, Au.D. Industry Consultant</div>	<div>Dr. Jerry L. Yanz, Ph.D. Director of Audiology, Hansaton Acoustics</div>
Question 1: What are the most common signs of hearing loss, and what do I do if I think I have a problem?	People talk too much about hearing loss. In the vast majority of cases I see, we should be emphasizing one's understanding loss as the call to action. Folks with high frequency hearing loss often hear the volume of speech in the low frequency ranges normally, where the vowels are, and perceive they "hear" normally. The high frequency consonants are often un-voiced and soft by nature, and 85 percent of understanding comes from the consonants in the highs. Time is very much of the essence, as one's corrective capabilities can be stabilized at much higher recognition levels with early intervention.	The most common sign of hearing loss is when a person hears but doesn't always understand the words. Do you or a loved one frequently ask people to repeat? Do friends or family ask you to turn down the radio or television? Do you think people are mumbling? Do you have trouble hearing in a crowd? If you have answered yes to one or more of these questions, then you need to have your hearing tested by your local hearing health professional.	The most common sign of hearing loss is not difficulty hearing speech but difficulty understanding it. Often the signs are hard to identify because they are inconsistent. Comprehension is more difficult in noisy places—restaurants, cars, or the annual family reunion—than in quiet places and more difficult with some voices—such as young kids with soft, high-frequency voices. This variability leads to confusion about who has the problem, the listener or the talker. If you suspect a problem, seek help from a licensed hearing professional to determine the nature and degree of the problem and get recommendations for remediation.
Question 2: What are the costs to quality of life when one has untreated hearing loss?	Hearing and understanding is , quite simply, the single biggest key to the quality of our relationships on every level of our lives. Denial, apathy, and procrastination rob so many and eventually lead to isolation and feelings of frustration on all sides of one's relationships. There is fresh evidence that untreated hearing and understanding loss can take a toll on one's cognitive functioning as we age. Why would one take the risk? We only live once; don't miss out. Live life to the fullest every day.	Cost of a hearing aid: \$1000 to \$3000 Cost of a Cochlear implant: \$30,000 Cost of untreated hearing loss on family household income: \$12,000 a year (BHI 2005) Being able to understand your granddaughter or loved ones: Priceless.	Hearing loss can compromise quality of life in various ways, depending on the degree of loss and whether help has been sought. Hearing loss in adults most often develops slowly and insidiously. Beginning with playful kidding among family and friends, the consequences of untreated hearing loss can take a toll on quality of life. Frequent embarrassment, frustration, mental fatigue—all of these are potential cost. As the loss progresses, people may become socially isolated because of the strain of trying to understand conversations and face challenges in the workplace.

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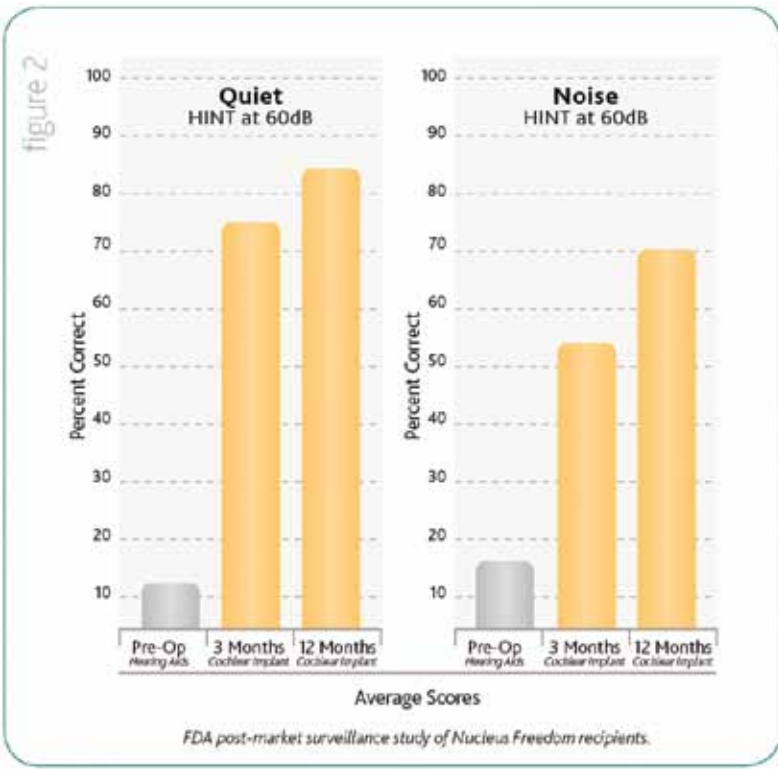
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What is a cochlear implant?

Continued from page 3

As illustrated in the graph (pictured left), on average patient understanding of speech improved from 10-15 percent to 85 percent after six months with the cochlear implant.