


Hearing HealthCare News®

A newsletter for our patients, their families and friends

 Summer 2025

Sudden Hearing Loss

Hearing loss usually develops very slowly, but it can also occur suddenly—literally overnight or in the space of a few days.

Sudden hearing loss can be caused by ear wax or ear pressure following an airplane flight. These cases are usually temporary. However, the term “*sudden hearing loss*” usually refers to a sensorineural loss. The loss is almost always in one ear and may be accompanied by *dizziness* or *tinnitus* (ear noises). Fortunately, sudden hearing loss is rare, occurring in about one in 10,000 people annually.

In most cases, the specific cause of sudden hearing loss is never found. Viral infection or vascular blockage are believed to be the most common causes.

Partial or complete recovery occurs in about 65% of the cases. Recovery can take from a few days to a few months. Those who seek immediate medical attention have a higher recovery rate than those who wait.

Someone who has a sudden hearing loss should seek medical attention as soon as possible. The medical evaluation usually includes a thorough history and physical, ear and hearing examinations. Follow-up care should include periodic audiologic examinations to monitor hearing levels.

Summer Travel Tips

Are you thinking of taking a trip? Here are some helpful tips:

Reservations

If you can, make your reservations on-line so hearing is not an issue. If you're making reservations over the phone:

- ▶ Let the agent know you have a hearing loss
- ▶ Repeat the information to confirm the details
- ▶ Ask for *written* confirmation

Before your trip

- ▶ Come in for a check-up of your hearing aids
- ▶ Pack a dri-aid kit or other durable container to protect your hearing aids
- ▶ Consider traveling with a spare set of hearing aids—just in case

Keep Your Hearing Healthy

Hearing is like exercise. If you don't use your hearing on a regular basis, you may not hear as well as someone who does.

Auditory deprivation occurs when a hearing system isn't “exercised” very much. The most common cause of auditory deprivation is *untreated* hearing loss. If your ear doesn't receive auditory stimulation on a regular basis, your ability to understand speech tends to decline slightly. The decline will usually reverse itself once the ear receives auditory stimulation again.

Researchers in the United States, England and Japan have studied children and adults who have hearing loss in both ears but use a hearing aid in only one ear. Their ability to understand speech tended to remain steady or improve in the ear with the hearing aid. The ear without a hearing aid tended to deteriorate in its ability to understand speech.

Several theories have been offered to explain the decline in hearing ability. One theory suggests there is a deterioration of the inner ear and nerves of the inner ear.



Exercise is good for your health—and your hearing.

According to another theory, since the auditory portion of the brain is not being stimulated very much, it “re-wires” itself to serve other functions.

The good news is that research also suggests that the ear/brain combination can recover from the decline in auditory ability. Several

studies demonstrate that speech understanding improves for up to 12 weeks after the initial hearing aid fitting. Apparently the brain “re-wires” itself to handle the new stimulation being provided by the amplified sounds and takes about 6 to 12 weeks to re-learn what to do with the new information.

Implications for hearing aid users

What does this mean for people with hearing loss?

1. *The longer a hearing loss is ignored, the greater the effects of auditory deprivation.* The sooner you begin using hearing aids, the better the results.
2. *Two hearing aids are better than one.* This will keep both ears and both sides of the brain actively involved in hearing.
3. *Improved hearing takes time.* It can take up to 12 weeks to get the full benefits of the new information provided by hearing aids.

Our recommendation? Keep your ears—and your brain—active and involved in hearing every day: Use it, don't lose it.

During your trip

- ▶ Public announcements can be very difficult to understand. Look for video monitors that post information about gates and departure times
- ▶ Consider letting the gate agent know you have a hearing loss
- ▶ Remember, hearing loss is invisible! Letting your fellow travelers and any guides or agents know you have a hearing loss will make travel easier for you—and for them

Hotels

- ▶ Most hotels and cruise ships provide assistive devices, including smoke and fire alarms
- ▶ At a hotel or on a cruise ship, let someone at the front desk know you have a hearing loss in case of emergency
- ▶ Television sets almost always have built-in captioning you can turn on

WELCOME

...to the Summer issue of our patient newsletter. We hope you find the information useful to you and to your family and friends.

Our practice is based on these fundamental principles:

- ▶ **Hearing loss is serious**
- ▶ **Hearing loss deserves professional care**
- ▶ **Hearing aids improve lives**

Prescription Medications and Your Hearing

Fortunately, there are only a few medications that can damage our hearing and balance systems. Referred to as **ototoxic** (*poisonous to the ear*), most of these medications are used in the treatment of bacterial infection and cancer.

Exposure to ototoxic medications can lead to hearing loss, tinnitus (ringing sounds) and dizziness, or any combination of these. The effects vary greatly from person to person. If hearing loss does occur, the amount of loss depends on dosage levels, how long the drug is administered, whether other ototoxic medications are being used, kidney function and other factors.

The hearing loss caused by ototox-

ic medications is almost always the **sensorineural** (inner ear) type and is usually permanent. Because sensitivity for higher pitches is usually affected first, the person may not notice the early stages of hearing loss. Tinnitus may be a warning sign, but the loss can occur without tinnitus.

There are certain antibiotics (**aminoglycosides**) that can cause hearing loss. **Streptomycin, neomycin, kanamycin, gentamycin** and other drugs in the "-mycin" family can also affect hearing. These drugs are usually given to treat serious infection.

Cisplatin, used to treat cancer, is ototoxic. Some diuretics, such as **Lasix**, and **quinine** (an antimalarial drug) can also cause hearing loss.

Aspirin, if taken in large doses, can damage hearing. However, the hearing loss caused by aspirin is usually temporary and hearing will return to previous levels within 72 hours of discontinuing use.

The role of audiology

Audiometric testing can identify any pre-existing hearing loss and monitor hearing levels. Early identification can also help the patient and family prepare and cope with the communication problems that may result. Audiologic rehabilitation may include counseling, speechreading (lipreading) and the evaluation and fitting of hearing aids or assistive listening devices.

Duncan *DN* Nulph
HEARING ASSOCIATES

5020 Ritter Road, Suite 106
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 762
Harrisburg, PA

SU25/2250

Good News

Financing for Hearing Aids - PATF offers 0% interest loans for 4 years. Pennsylvania Assistive Technology Foundation (PATF) programs are available to Pennsylvanians of all ages, income levels, all disabilities and health conditions. PATF provides financial loans for the purchase of assistive technology devices such as hearing aids. PATF can help people with disabilities and older Pennsylvanians get the assistive technology they need like hearing aids. **Learn more at www.patf.us**

Hearing Aid Moisture issues cost time, money, and cause frustration for all. We recommend **Redux**, the professional moisture removal treatment that leave hearing aids sounding their best and you hearing your best. Hearing aids can lose sound quality by becoming "flooded" and need treatment to remove harmful moisture buildup. Even if exposed to accidental rain shower, wash or spill, your hearing aids sound their best with a **Redux** treatment. **Redux** provides quick and verified moisture removal and is safe for rechargeable batteries! Call us for more information or bring your hearing aids in for a treatment.

Sincerely,

Dr. Kristen A. Duncan Au.D.

Dr. Danette Nulph, Au.D.

Dr. Lisa Brown, Au.D.

Duncan-Nulph Hearing Associates

Telephone: (717) 766-1500 • Visit us on the web: www.dnhearing.com