

# THE HEARING AID CENTER

## *News Corner*

### EAR HEALTH

Earwax, also known as cerumen, is an amber or yellow material made in the ear canal. It cleans and protects the ears from bacteria, dust, foreign particles, and microorganisms. In normal conditions, wax works its way out of the canal and into the ear opening naturally. However, when there is a build-up of wax, there are many ways to remove it. Some are safe, and some are not. Let's review best practices for dealing with earwax.

#### Do's

1. Do understand that earwax is normal. If it does not block the ear canal or impede your hearing, it can be left as is.
2. Do know the symptoms of earwax build-up. These include decreased hearing, ear fullness, ringing in the ears, and changes to hearing aid functionality (distortion, etc.).
3. Do seek medical help if you experience a change in hearing, ringing, or fullness in your ears, and/or ear pain. Other conditions may exhibit symptoms like earwax build-up, such as ear infections. See a medical professional to rule these out if you experience any of the previously mentioned signs.

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### DIABETES AND HEARING LOSS

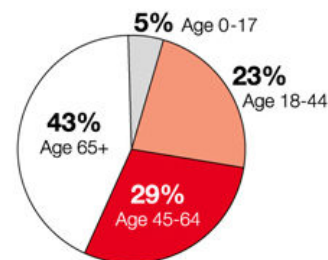
Diabetes and hearing loss are two of America's most widespread health concerns. Nearly 26 million people in the U.S. have diabetes, and an estimated 34.5 million have some type of hearing loss.

The numbers are similar — is there a link?

Yes, says the National Institutes of Health (NIH). In fact, the NIH has found that hearing loss is twice as common in people with diabetes as it is in those who don't have the disease. Also, of the 79 million adults thought to have pre-diabetes, the rate of hearing loss is 30% higher than in those with normal blood sugar.

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#### Who has hearing loss?



Source:  
<http://ihcrp.georgetown.edu/agingsociety/pdfs/hearing.pdf>

#### How does diabetes contribute to hearing loss?

Hearing depends on small blood vessels and nerves in the inner ear. Researchers believe that, over time, high blood glucose levels can damage these vessels and nerves, diminishing the ability to hear.

#### I don't think I have any problem with my hearing.

Are you sure? For most people, hearing loss happens over time. The symptoms can be hard to notice. Quite often, family members and friends notice hearing loss before the person experiencing it.

Your doctor may not always screen for hearing loss during a physical. Even if your doctor does check for hearing loss, you may still "pass" the screening test in a quiet exam room. Common signs of hearing loss include:

- Frequently asking others to repeat themselves
- Trouble following conversations that involve more than two people
- Thinking that others are mumbling
- Problems hearing in noisy places such as busy restaurants
- Trouble hearing the voices of women and small children
- Turning up the TV or radio volume too loud for others who are nearby

#### I'm not even 65 — how could my hearing be bad already?

Most people with hearing loss are younger than 65. Hearing problems can even happen in children.

#### What should I do if I suspect a hearing loss?

Talk to your primary care doctor. You may then want to seek help from hearing specialist like: an audiologist, a licensed hearing aid dispenser or a doctor who

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## FOCUS ON: Oticon S

It has been almost 3 years since Oticon released their last major technology upgrade. Since that time Oticon has been forcing other manufacturers to play catch up. Oticon surprised the industry with the OPN platform concept which allows listeners to hear more of the world around them while simultaneously eliminating significant background noise. The common refrain we heard in our office with patients with the Oticon OPN was I'm hearing more sounds than ever, but I'm not distracted by them. The new OPN S has definitely made some improvements over their last platform. Taking this proven concept another step further. The first and the one we are happiest to see is a new rechargeable battery design. The previous version fell below our expectations and we are glad to see a complete redesign with an integrated lithium ion battery. This will improve battery life and reliability. Another improvement we are seeing is an improvement in high frequency power or gain with reduced feedback (whistling) potential. This will particularly help clients with a severe high frequency loss or who lost their hearing to significant loud noise exposure.

As always, if you would like to demo the latest technology from any of the major manufacturers give us a call.



### ◀ Diabetes (continued)

specializes in hearing problems. From a full hearing exam, you'll learn more about your hearing loss. You will also be told what can be done to treat it.

#### **What can be done to treat a hearing loss?**

Sometimes the problem is just an earwax build-up and the patient is referred to a doctor to remove the wax. Treatment will depend on the type of hearing loss. The most common type of hearing loss is called "sensorineural hearing loss." This is the kind usually found with diabetes. It cannot usually be cured. However, most cases of sensorineural hearing loss can be treated with hearing aids.

#### **How can I be sure that hearing aids will help?**

Hearing aids have changed a lot in the past few years. Instead of making all sounds louder, like the old kind, newer hearing aids are better at making what you want to hear more clear. These hearing aids also have special features. They may have automatic volume control and can reduce background noise.

#### **But I don't want to be seen wearing hearing aids.**

Hearing aids are getting smaller and smaller. It is unlikely anyone will notice when you are wearing them. The truth is, people are more likely to notice your hearing loss. People who don't treat their hearing problems can become depressed and try to avoid their friends. On the other hand, studies show that people who wear hearing aids often have a better quality of life.

### ◀ Ear Health (continued)

4. Certain medical conditions such as a history of ear drum perforations can make some at-home remedies unsafe. If you have a history of ear drum rupture or have had surgery on your ear in the past, consult your physician.

## Dont's

1. Don't clean your ears too much. We recommend using hydrogen peroxide once a week to help keep the ear clean if you produce a lot of wax. Come by our office and we'll give you the instruction guide for this.
2. Don't put anything smaller than your elbow in your ear. Avoid using cotton swabs, bobby pins, keys, paper clips, etc. to clean or scratch your ears. These can cause damage to your ear canal — such as a cut, or even puncture of the eardrum — which can lead to many other issues.
3. Don't use ear candles. Studies have shown ear candling does not reduce the amount of wax in individuals' ear canals. Additionally, ear candling can damage the ear canal and eardrum.
4. Don't forget to clean your hearing aids as recommended by your hearing healthcare professional.

If you think you may have earwax build-up or are concerned about any changes to your hearing please give us a call.

## ANNA'S FAVORITE TOMATO SAUCE

The moment I came across this recipe I had to make it for my family. The delicious flavor and pure simplicity is genius! I use this sauce on homemade pizza, pasta, lasagna, and chicken parmesan.

*Bon Appetit!*

### Ingredients:

1 (28-ounce) can peeled plum tomatoes, no salt or herbs added  
8 tablespoons unsalted butter  
1 small white onion, peeled and cut in half  
salt to taste

### Cooking Directions:

Put the tomatoes, onion, butter, and salt in a 4 - 5 quart saucepan over medium heat. When the tomatoes begin to bubble, lower the heat to a slow but steady simmer. Cook, stirring every 10 to 15 minutes, until the tomatoes are no longer watery and the sauce has reduced, about 45 minutes, depending on the size and shape of the pot. The sauce is done when the butter has separated from the tomatoes and there is no remaining liquid. Use a hand blender if you prefer and add salt to taste. **Enjoy!**

