

LAKEWOOD HEALTH WATCH

Hearing Loss And Dementia's Tie

by Katie Stickel

Did you know our brains and our ears are directly correlated with each other? Many do not. Recent studies show that patients under 70 who have hearing loss and are treating it with hearing devices may reduce their risk for dementia by 61% over 20 years, according to JAMA. We are continuously educating our patients on this day-to-day in the clinic. Hearing loss is one of the largest potential risk factors for dementia. When a hearing loss is untreated, our brain must work harder to process sounds which will lead to cognitive overload. Even low levels of hearing loss are associated with an increased risk of dementia. Our brain needs to be stimulated. I discuss brain health with each of my patients so they are aware of the risk that can occur.

I see signs of cognitive decline often in the clinic. I have witnessed firsthand the effects of not treating a hearing loss vs. the effects of treating it. Hearing aids are not just for “when you’re getting older.” They are for when you first recognize a loss is present and hearing loss comes at all ages. I see patients in the office that are in



their 20s and patients that just turned 103. This makes me think of a patient I treated years back. I had a 47-year-old man come into the office with his wife. He did not want to be in a hearing aid office and he showed it. She did all the talking for him, he sat quiet, straight faced, seemed very distant and isolated. He was showing signs of cognitive decline, and he did not even realize it. His wife told me he is just not the same man anymore. After evaluating him and discovering he had a loss in both ears, I treated him with hearing aids. The next time I saw him he was a completely different person. We

sat and talked for quite some time, he smiled, was happy, was doing more again with his family and enjoying his life. He was thankful his wife saw the signs early and got him to come in to be checked. This was so amazing to be a part of.

Regular hearing evaluations, at all ages, are crucial for early detection and intervention, which can slow cognitive decline. I walk patients through each step, explain the process and make sure they’re comfortable throughout the entire appointment. The process itself does not take very long, and I recommend if you haven’t had your hearing tested or it has been some time since your last audiogram you should schedule an evaluation. There are many factors that can cause damage to our hearing that most people don’t realize, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, noise exposure and many more, if left untreated you are at a much higher risk. Most times you don’t notice first you’re having trouble, usually your family or friends will: listen to them. I want the best quality of life for every patient I see. Catching those early signs can make a world of difference.

Katie Stickel is a Hearing Care Provider at Beltone Hearing in Lakewood. She is a dedicated member of the Beltone team, committed to delivering exceptional hearing care and support.



Seeking Musicians For Cleveland Pride Orchestra

by Corey Snipe

The Cleveland Pride Band is starting a string orchestra in 2026, and is seeking interested string players. Join us for a casual, open reading session in Lakewood this Sunday (December 7th) at 4pm.

Cleveland is part of the national Pride Band Alliance, and is only the 5th city in the US to start a pride orchestra. Several other cities have expressed interest, and are looking to Cleveland as a model. The mission of Cleveland Pride Band is to create an authentic space for LGBTQ+ and allied musicians to promote community, visibility, education and engagement through music performance. We welcome adult (18+) musicians of all skill levels and identities.

Sunday’s open reading session and 2026 rehearsals will be held at Lakewood Congregational Church (1375 W. Clifton Blvd., Lakewood, OH 44107). For more information: <https://clevelandprideband.org>

Corey Snipes is a Lakewood dad, computer and drone guy, and string musician.

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