



**Pinnacle ENT**  
ASSOCIATES LLC  
EAR, NOSE & THROAT, ALLERGY  
& AUDIOLOGY SERVICES

Fall 2018

## CLINIC NEWS

### Walk4Hearing

For the third year in a row, Pinnacle ENT will be sponsoring and participating in the annual Walk4Hearing event on October 21 in Philadelphia.

The Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) Walk4Hearing is the largest walk for hearing loss awareness in the country. Every spring and fall thousands of walkers – children and their families, young adults, young at heart, professionals, corporations and everyone in between – form teams and walk in their communities to increase public awareness about hearing loss and raise funds for programs and services. HLAA depends on generous volunteers to raise funds, generate enthusiasm and awareness at each of the Walk4Hearing sites.

Since its inception in 2006, more than 90,000 walkers have stepped up, raising \$13 million. Money raised from the Walk4Hearing is shared between the local Walk sites and the HLAA national organization.

To learn more about the Walk4 Hearing or to contribute, visit <https://www.hearingloss.org/programs-events/walk4hearing>.

# October

## IS AUDIOLOGY AWARENESS MONTH

More than 48 million Americans suffer from hearing loss. While this condition is often viewed as an inevitable part of aging, over half of all patients are otherwise healthy adults under the age of 65.

Regular hearing exams are an invaluable tool in identifying problems early and taking steps to prevent further hearing damage before it is too late. Fortunately, nearly all types of hearing loss are treatable by an audiologist. We encourage you to schedule an appointment for a hearing exam with one of our audiologists during the month of October, recognized nationwide as Audiology Awareness Month.

Audiology is the study of hearing and balance disorders. The goal of this national month-long observance is to raise awareness of audiology and the importance of hearing protection in preventing hearing loss.

Hearing loss can be caused by a variety of factors including

noise exposure, trauma, diseases of the inner and middle ear, ear infections, excess earwax and certain medications.

It can happen so gradually, you may not be aware of a problem until it has reached an advanced stage. Signs and symptoms of hearing loss include difficulty understanding others when they speak (speech may appear to be muffled or garbled), asking speakers to frequently repeat what they have said, the inability to distinguish speech from distracting background sounds, turning up the volume to levels that others find too loud and tinnitus (ringing in the ears).

Your hearing is crucial to your wellbeing. If you are committed to taking care of your hearing health, contact PENTA today for a comprehensive hearing evaluation.



# New Study Reveals Hearing Aids Slow Cognitive Decline

A new study published this year in the Journal of the American Geriatrics Society further supports existing evidence that wearing hearing aids can help slow cognitive decline in elderly patients. There are generally two schools of thought when it comes to the relationship between hearing and cognition:

- **The common cause hypothesis states that hearing loss and cognitive decline both involve age-related problems, such as tissue degeneration of the central nervous system.**
- **The cascade hypothesis theorizes that over time, untreated hearing loss results in inadequate brain stimulation, leading to cognitive decline.**

The study referenced above involved 2040 hearing aid users who self-reported symptoms over 18 years. Results showed that while episodic memory did decline with age for most users, the rate of cognitive decline was slower for patients who used hearing devices. These results were adjusted by researchers to account for overall health, socioeconomic status and other demographic characteristics.

The results of this study support the cascade hypothesis; researchers state that hearing aids can provide individuals with improved auditory input, which delays cognitive decline “by preventing the adverse effects of auditory deprivation or facilitating lower levels of depression symptoms, greater social engagement and higher self-efficacy.”

They key takeaways of the study include the following:

- **While hearing aids do not prevent cognitive decline, mounting evidence suggests that they can slow it down.**
- **Patients who wear hearing aids are less likely to be depressed and more likely to be socially engaged and self-confident in their communication abilities. Social engagement and physical activity help stave off cognitive decline and dementia.**
- **Hearing aids fitted by an expert audiologist should be recommended for patients even in the early stages of hearing loss.**

Source: Maharani, A., Dawes, P. et al. (2018) Longitudinal relationship between hearing aid use and cognitive function in older Americans. Journal of the American Geriatrics Society. Published online April 26.





# Hearing Loss Affects Kids, Too



*Three million children under 18 years old suffer from hearing loss, including nearly four of every one thousand newborn babies.\**

The first two years of a child's life are hugely important in physical development as well as in forming emotional, learning and communication skills. At times, it can be challenging to identify a hearing loss in children, particularly if they are not yet speaking or the hearing loss is mild to moderate. Some signs you may look for are:

## 0-4 Months:

- Does your child react to loud sounds?
- Are they calmed by a familiar voice?

## 4-9 Months:

- Do they smile or react when you speak?
- Are they babbling?

## 9-15 Months:

- Do they repeat simple sounds?
- Are they responding to their name?

## 15-24 Months:

- Are they repeating sounds that you make?
- Do they follow basic commands?

These may not necessarily indicate the presence of a hearing loss, but if your child is not exhibiting these behaviors in the expected timeframe, we recommend having their hearing

tested. This will help in the diagnosis of any hearing or speech disorders.

## Common hearing tests for babies and children include:

- **Auditory brainstem response (ABR)** involves placing electrodes to be placed on the child's head to record brain activity in response to sounds. This provides an audiologist with information on their inner ear and the neuronal pathway that connects the ear to the brain.
- **Otoacoustic emissions (OAE)** testing uses a microphone and earphone to calculate an infant's hearing abilities by measuring the reflection of a sound's echo as it passes through the ear canal.
- **Tympanometry** is a test of the middle ear used to detect fluid, wax buildup, eardrum perforations and tumors. It measures movement of the eardrum in response to air pressure.
- **Acoustic reflex tests** measure involuntary muscle contractions of the middle ear and is used to determine the location of your hearing problem.

If your child has never had their hearing tested, or is showing signs of hearing loss, we encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity to care for your child's hearing health by scheduling an appointment today!

\* <http://www.entnet.org/node/1255>

# Allergies & The Immune System



Allergies are extremely common, affecting about one out of every five Americans. Understanding what causes them, and what particular allergens are responsible for triggering your symptoms, are the keys to successful treatment.

The immune system functions as the body's first line of defense against germs and bacteria and is essential for maintaining good health and preventing infections. When the immune system encounters a threat, it responds by attacking the foreign substance. Allergies are an exaggerated immune system response to an otherwise harmless substance. They are the result of antibodies that trigger the release of histamines, chemicals that enter the bloodstream and cause swelling, inflammation, itchiness and mucus production – the telltale signs of an allergic response. They may also cause a rash or hives.

Allergies may occur seasonally or year-round. Pollen from trees, grasses and weeds is a common allergen that causes hay fever in many individuals. Year-round allergens include animal dander, dust mites, mold, medications, chemicals and

insect bites. Allergy sufferers experience a variety of cold-like symptoms including congestion, runny nose, sneezing, itchiness, postnasal drip, watery eyes and sinus pain or pressure.

If you suffer from allergies, we can help! You have probably tried over-the-counter medications such as antihistamines and decongestants; while these bring temporary relief, they are not a cure for allergies, and their effectiveness is limited. Seeing an allergist is your best bet in finding a long-term solution. Our clinic provides skin testing to determine the allergen(s) responsible for your symptoms, an important first step in finding a treatment that will work. Immunotherapy (allergy shots) is an effective method that helps reduce the severity of your symptoms over time as your body builds up immunity to the offending substance.

*If you're tired of dealing with the misery allergies bring, contact one of our allergists today. We are here to help!*





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# Take This Quick and Easy Self-Screening Quiz

- Do people seem to mumble or speak in a soft voice?
- When you are with other people, does background noise bother you?
- Is carrying on a conversation on the telephone difficult?

If you answered “**yes**” to any of these questions, it is highly recommended that you make an appointment to see a hearing healthcare provider for an accurate diagnosis and evaluation of treatment options.

**Call us today 610.902.6092**

**Learn more about the  
services we provide and  
how we can help.**



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