

Volume 4 Issue 3

## Hear the News!!!

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**Fall Prevention**— Remember that falls can have very negative effects on your quality of life. Here are a few more tips to help keep you safe.

### **Do you...**

#### Take smaller steps or catch your toe often?

- Avoid (remove!) throw rugs in your home, or secure them down
- Make sure floor is clear of all clutter
- Wear proper footwear
- Consider foot orthotics

#### Keep frequently used items on high shelves?

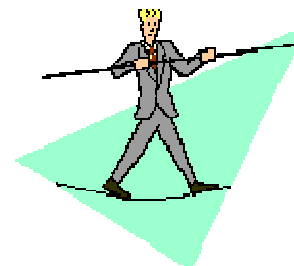
- Move items to shelves easier to reach (shoulder height)
- Utilize a long-handled grasper

#### Have difficulty getting in and out of bed?

- Participate in strength training
- Learn other functional techniques (e.g. log roll)

#### Have trouble using the bathtub or shower?

- Install grab bars near/in the bathtub or shower
- Put a non-skid mat in the shower/tub
- Use: A shower/tub chair  
Soap-on-a-rope or long-handled sponge  
Hand-held shower head



# T i n n i t u s

What is it? The buzz or the ringing sound in your ears is truly a common phenomenon. 94% of Americans have it for 30 seconds or less on a periodic basis; called spontaneous transient tinnitus. For 12 million people, it is constant. For 1-2 million people, it is bothersome and they seek assistance in dealing with it. Tinnitus is a subjective sound – meaning, only you can hear that sound. Tinnitus also involves the brain's emotional center and that is why it becomes annoying and troublesome. It is not a disease, but a symptom that something has gone wrong somewhere in your auditory system. This problem may require medical attention, so it is a good idea to discuss this with your doctor. Most times though, it is a signal that calls attention to itself as important, and really, it should be filed in the *unimportant* category.

Tinnitus is usually a very quiet sound, even though it seems loud to you. It is usually 0-9 dB above the softest sound you can hear at a particular frequency or pitch. There is a lot of research going on right now to find the causes and the cure. The most common cause of tinnitus is noise exposure. Tinnitus can be relieved by sound therapy. By introducing sound, the contrast between the internal sound your brain hears and the quiet environment is reduced. How does that work? The brain tunes into the external sound and it is able to ignore or “put into its proper place” the internal tinnitus. The most important thing you can do is **AVOID silence**. Silence will only focus attention to the tinnitus. Other treatments include biofeedback, relaxation techniques and counseling. Check out the website for the American Tinnitus Association [www.ata.org](http://www.ata.org) - it has loads of information. They love hearing from people just like you!

From the American Tinnitus Association - Tinnitus Today, September 2004

# Communication Corner

In America, more than 12,000 babies will be born with a hearing loss this year. Each state has a program - the Early Hearing Detection in place to identify these children at birth. There are 3 core national goals. 1 – screening all infants by one month of age. 2 – having a complete diagnostic evaluation on those that do not pass the screening by 3 months of age. 3 – Enrolling the child with hearing loss into early intervention services by 6 months of age. Research has shown that children who begin intervention before 6 months have more normal speech and language abilities, cognition, social skills and self-esteem than children who start services after 6 months of age. Still some children get lost or families refuse services. Encourage parents to participate – it will only help their child.

FROM: Audiology Today May/June 2005, 17 (3) p.17.



Parents and Grandparents...

There are several ways families can promote spoken language in their child. These tips will work great for any child, with a hearing loss or not, who is learning language, from 6 months to 3 years.

- Create a need to communicate; don't anticipate her needs!
- use daily routines and repetitive language
- Narrate your child's actions with simple, two-word comments
- Highlight important speech sounds by making them louder or longer
- Talk to yourself about what you are doing, seeing, and hearing
- Follow your child's lead; talk about what interests her
- Model appropriate speech and language using short, simple phrases

## More Information on Phones...

Due to increased technology used in households, our typical 2.4GHz cordless phones are experiencing lots of interference. Interference will include: Wi-Fi networks, Bluetooth technology, wireless speakers, baby monitors, and walkie-talkies.

New cordless phones are now in the 5.8GHz range. This will clear up the airways for now, but may also have long-ranging effects on other assistive listening technology such as wireless FM systems. As our technology becomes more wireless in general, interference may play a factor. Check to see if your phone is hearing aid compatible before you buy. Companies are only required to offer two models of phones that are compatible with hearing aids.



## Personnel Notes

Dr. Debbie Baerlocher will attend the national audiology conference in April and is looking forward to playing outdoors this spring with her family.

April Fagerson will also attend the national audiology conference in April and is looking forward to a vacation in Guatemala this spring.

Clair Ketchum has left us for the Denver area. We will miss her so much!

Dr. Shannon Gower is looking forward to welcoming baby #2 in May and enjoying most of the summer off to recover and spend time with her two children.

Jill Galanter is now in the Boise office.

Dayna Olson is our new physical therapist who joined the Elks in October. She is excited about helping people with balance and vestibular problems, and especially likes the new space and equipment. For fun she enjoys martial arts and playing the cello.



## Patient of the Month!

Our patient of the month is a patient who has had success with amplification, not because of a special hearing aid or because he/she does not have any difficult listening situations, but because this patient has found that using hearing aids has *improved his/her quality of life* -our goal!

This month's patient is Gloria S., a 54-year old woman from Meridian. She had been wearing completely-in-the-canal non-digital hearing aids bilaterally since 1998. She was noting she could not hear well and was missing out on conversation. She wanted in-the-ear hearing aids for both ears. Upon fitting custom aids, two problems were found: one, the fit of the aids was poor and two, we had feedback very easily even with the anti-feedback technology. Remakes were made but unfortunately, the problems were not fixed. Her audiologist felt that because we were having these concerns now, her hearing aids may not be appropriate if her hearing loss changed within two years. Therefore, behind-the-ear hearing aids were recommended and both problems were solved! There is also room for adjustments in the future.

Gloria now finds her hearing is "100% better, I find I can hear conversations and outside noises like birds a lot better." She finds that she does not have to ask for repetition. She can "hear the radio, TV, hear people talk and listen to outside noises" without difficulty. She is more comfortable in conversation because "I can understand a lot more words and keep up with the conversation better." She finds she can follow TV much more easily without needing more volume. She finds she likes her hearing aids because "I can contribute a lot more to conversations and understand what is going on around me."

## New Developments! At The Hearing and Balance Center *at the* Elks...

Laurie Stucki—received her Doctor of Audiology, AuD, in December. And she and her husband welcomed a baby boy in March—congrats times two!

We are welcoming two new faces to our office in Nampa: Paul Lancaster is an audiologist who hails from Utah and will be graduating with his AuD. in May and Jennifer Steiner, our new physical therapist, a native Idahoan from McCall who graduated from ISU in 2001.

Clair Ketchum has moved to the Denver area. We will miss her profoundly. She has been a part of this department for 13 years. Best wishes for all future success.

**Two** of our employees were employee of the month this year: Erika Blanchard in Boise and Katie Yates in Meridian. Well-deserved recognition to both of you!

Our Meridian office expansion is complete. We have some new, state-of-the-art equipment which will help us meet your hearing and balance needs. Our phone number has changed too. It is now 489-5999.

### Hearing Loss Facts:

Most hearing losses develop over a period of 25-30 years. Hearing loss increases with age. By 2030, nearly 60 million Americans will have hearing loss. The large majority of hearing loss (95%) can be treated successfully with hearing aids. Sadly however, only 20% of the population use them due to reasons such as cost, cosmetics and fear of what others will think.