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**Dizziness vs. Vertigo vs. Balance**

The above terms mean different things and signify separate disorders, although there may be similarities between them. Roughly 1/3 of the population - that's 90 million people - will seek a doctor's help for dizziness at least once in their life. Dizziness is a more general symptom that includes light-headedness or faint-feelings. Vertigo is specific to the feeling that you or the room is spinning. This can last from moments to hours and be mild to incapacitating. Balance problems leave a feeling of unsteadiness or fear of falling. This will happen when you are on your feet (walking/standing) and can be-or not- accompanied by dizziness or vertigo.



Determining the cause of dizziness can be complicated. Keeping a **dizziness diary** can provide valuable information for your health care professional. Include where you were, time of day, activity you were doing, symptoms, how long the spell lasted, how long it took to recover, and steps you've taken to relieve your symptoms.



Elks Hearing & Balance Center

**Two Ears are Better than One!**

*The Facts:*

- 80% of those with hearing loss have problems hearing in BOTH ears
- Amplifying only one ear actually makes it MORE DIFFICULT to hear in noise
- The ear WITHOUT the hearing aid becomes fatigued and strains to hear
- Studies show that even when a hearing loss is worse in one ear, wearing two hearing aids produces the MOST benefit.



*Years of Research have Proven the Benefit of Two Hearing Aids:*

- Increased Speech Understanding (easier and more comfortable to hear)
- Enhanced Sound Quality (volumes can be set lower, reducing distortion)
- Improved Localization (determining where sounds are coming from)
- Reduces the "head shadow" - sounds from the other side are softer

Patients report "more normal" hearing and find they do not have to "work as hard" to hear when using two hearing aids.

There is new technology available to take advantage of our brain's natural desire to hear with two ears. Ask your Audiologist about it!

**New Developments at the Elks H&B**

1. We have three new staff members to welcome: Wendy Hills, secretary for our Nampa office and two Doctors of Audiology: Erin Castioni in Nampa and Larissa Mann in our Ontario, OR office. We are thrilled to add them to our team.
2. Congratulations! to Jill Galanter, PT in our Boise office who in May graduated with her Doctorate in Physical Therapy.
3. Congratulations are also due to Dr. April Fagerson, who has recently been promoted to the position of Clinic Manager for the Boise office and Erika Blanchard, who was promoted to Audiology Program Manager.
4. Susie Jones, our speech-language pathologist, recently completed an intensive training by Professional Preparation in Cochlear Implants (PPCI) training program to further her skills in listening, spoken language development and address the medical and educational aspects of pediatric cochlear implantation.
5. On a fun note, Dr. April Ward, sang the National Anthem for a Boise Hawks game on July 12th. Check out our blog to hear her.
6. Please join us for our support groups: **Adult Aural Rehabilitation:** September 1st - Hearing Loss, October 6th - Communication Strategies, November 3rd - Hearing Aids and December 1st - Assistive Listening Devices. Please call our Boise office for more information. **Vestibular Support Group:** September 7th, 1-2pm - The Benefits of Tai Chi on Balance. Held in our Meridian location. Please wear comfortable clothing. **Toddler Play Group for children with hearing loss and their families:** September 18th, 10am-Noon at Foothills Learning Center. Join us for a nature walk and learn about camouflage in the "wild"! RSVP to Karrie at 489-4739.

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## Teens and Hearing Loss

A survey done by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) found that almost 30% of high school students reported that they needed to turn up the volume on their TV or radio or that they frequently said “what” or “huh” in normal conversation. 17% of teenagers also reported experiencing tinnitus (ringing in the ears). More than half of the teenagers (59%) said they played their iPod or MP3 player at “loud” volumes.

Although the study did not test the hearing of the teenagers or specify if the students who played their personal stereos “loud” were the ones experiencing tinnitus or difficulty hearing, the survey makes it obvious that young people live in a noisy world. What they may not know is that over time, their MP3 habit can lead to permanent noise-induced hearing loss by damaging the inner ear’s sensory cells (“hair cells”) in the cochlea.

An analysis of portable, digital music players by researchers at the University of Colorado and Children’s Hospital in Boston resulted in guidelines for safe listening levels when using these products. The study indicated that an iPod is safe to use 4.6 hours per day at 70% volume, and 90 minutes per day at 80% volume. Listening at full volume for more than 5 minutes per day can increase the risk of hearing loss.

The experts also offered practical advice: if you cannot hear someone speaking near you while you are listening to your music, the volume on the device is too loud.

[www.asha.org](http://www.asha.org); [www.medscape.com](http://www.medscape.com)

## Can Cell Phones Cause Hearing Loss

The American Academy of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery is warning cell phone users that long-term use of a cell phone may damage the inner ear and cause hearing loss. The medical association also warned that using a cell phone for more than 60 minutes a day may result in worse hearing in that ear compared to the opposite ear.

A study titled “Audiological Disturbances in Long-Term Mobile Phone Users” (September 19, 2007) evaluated 100 people, aged 18 to 45, who had used mobile phones for at least a year, dividing them into three groups according to length of use. One group had used phones for 1-2 years; another group used cell phones for 2-4 years, and a group used them for more than >4 years. They compared the phone users with 50 people who had never used cell phones and served as a control group.

### What the researchers found:

1. Those who used the mobile phones for more than 4 years had more hearing loss (25 decibel loss) in high-frequency ranges in their right ear, the ear most held the phone to, than those who used the mobile phone for 1-2 years (16 decibel loss).

2. The type of inner ear damage that resulted from cell phones was likely to be high-frequency. Individuals with high frequency hearing loss lose the ability to hear soft, high-frequency consonants, such as /s/f/t/z.

3. Mobile phone users who had symptoms such as a warm sensation, fullness in the ears, or ringing were more likely to have the high-frequency hearing loss. It was speculated that long-term mobile phone use may result in inner ear damage. And symptoms such as ear warmth or fullness could be early warning signs of that damage.

**Researcher’s and physician advice?** Use cell phones only when absolutely necessary and use hands-free or speaker settings whenever possible.

[www.entnet.org](http://www.entnet.org)

### Audiology Q & A: QUESTION: Do I need one or two hearing aids?

**ANSWER:** That will depend on your hearing loss. If you have one normal ear, then one hearing aid will be appropriate. If both ears have a loss, then two aids would be best. If you have one ear that does not process speech as well, two hearing aids may not provide the same benefits that one aid in the good ear would provide. You will have time to try aids and your audiologist will recommend what’s best.

**Advantages of Binaural** (hearing with two ears) **hearing:** depth perception, better speech discrimination in noise, localization, balance of sound and hearing in noise.

## Successful Hearing Aid Fittings

This is a continuation of an article that appeared in our January 2010 newsletter. We are looking at issues related to purchasing hearing aids. In the first part, we reviewed the difference between an audiologist and a hearing aid dispenser, the difference between a free hearing test and a diagnostic evaluation, and how going for a “cheap” hearing aid can actually set you up for problems. Let’s continue questions about some ‘ingredients’ for successful hearing aid fittings.

What about the size and style of hearing aids? Many people want only the smallest and least visible option. That can be your goal, but if that is not going to appropriately help you hear, than it is not money and time well spent. When an audiologist is considering the style and size of a hearing aid, the first consideration is your hearing loss and what style of aid is best for that hearing loss. The next consideration is your listening needs, that is, what you said about your daily life and the difficulties you might be having in various situations. Lastly, is the cosmetic appeal of the aids. We both may need to make compromises. However, our recommendation is going to be for optimal hearing. If the size/style is not acceptable, concessions in the performance expectations of the hearing aid are needed.

The features available in the hearing aids (ie. noise reduction) will be based on your needs, the style that is decided upon and the price point with which we are working. The best suggestion regarding price is go with the best hearing aid you can afford. We are not only fitting your hearing loss today, we are fitting it for 3 years from now. This is an investment in yourself and your relationships. From years of experience, what we find is patients who choose entry level technology are very happy with it at the beginning. But, as time passes, they want more from the hearing aid, and the options to improve the listening situation are not available. At the Elks, the pricing not only includes the cost of the hearing aids, but also the cost of the care of the hearing aids for the lifetime of that aid. We strive to keep your aids in peak condition for as long as they are appropriate for you. So it seems like a lot of money at first, but divided up across 5-7 years with two-three office visits per year to see a Doctor of Audiology and receive validation and verification that your aid is working to manufacturers’ specifications and your listening needs, are an important part of your healthcare and maintaining good relationships and communication with loved ones. Smell the sweet aroma of success and look in the mirror and you see what it looks like – You!

### So my recipe for success?

- See an Elks audiologist (5 locations),
- Receive a thorough diagnostic hearing evaluation
- Discuss listening needs, expectations, benefits and limitations of hearing aids
- Form a trust-based relationship with the audiologist
- Know we verify and validate every hearing aid with current research-backed methods and equipment
- Understand we work with and sell only the top manufactur-

er’s products based on research, success with our patients and the customer service and training they provide to us so that we can provide the best for you

- Mix in some smiles
- One heaping cup of motivation from you
- Bake for 6 weeks during which the burning questions to be answered are: Am I hearing better? Is listening easier for me?

*Elks Hearing & Balance Center*

## Special Offer Exclusive For Our Readers!

**50% off** of the usual and customary price of a set of personal earmolds to fit with a hands-free cell phone/ipod device for improved comfort, less background noise and improved ability to hear with the volume turned down. Cost is \$37.50 each.

*This coupon expires in 6 months – March 31, 2011.*

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### EAGLE

3101 East State St., Suite 2108  
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### NAMPA

220 10th Ave. South  
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