

SeniorCircle plus

NEWS AND HEALTH INFORMATION FOR SENIORS

SUMMER 2006

Listen Up

From surgery to hearing aids, help is available to combat hearing loss

Genelle McCall knew something was wrong when she began asking others more frequently to repeat what they were saying to her. And it wasn't because they were speaking in low tones or whispering.

"I was telling people 'I can't hear you'," says McCall, 87, of Cleveland Heights.

Family members had their suspicions. "They told me I should have my hearing tested."

These suspicions were confirmed about nine years ago when hearing tests and evaluations detected hearing loss in McCall's left ear.

McCall, who wears hearing aids in both ears, says she took the news in stride, and has accepted continued hearing loss as part of aging.

"As long as we are alive we are going to experience gradual hearing loss," says Jacob Z. Slepian, M.D.,



Jacob Z. Slepian, M.D., monitors a hearing test for Genelle McCall.

adult and pediatric ear, nose and throat (ENT) specialist at Huron and Euclid hospitals. "This is going to happen because the thousands of nerve endings in our ears that enable us to hear wear out over time."

How Hearing Loss Happens

Aside from the deterioration of nerve endings, other factors also affect our hearing. Hearing loss can result from a condition that causes an abnormal buildup of earwax, which is supposed to keep the ear canal lubricated. Loss also stems from infections, growths or injuries to the middle and inner ear—including the eardrum and various small bones that help us hear and understand what we're hearing—Dr. Slepian says.

Hearing loss also affects younger individuals and those who consistently


Sound Advice

While hearing loss is inevitable as we age, there are steps we can take to maintain hearing for as long as possible.

- Limit exposure to loud sounds.
- Refrain from routinely wearing earphones to listen to music or other presentations.
- Maintain overall good health.
- Do not use cotton swabs, hair-pins or other sharp objects to clean inside the ear. Use solutions recommended by physicians.
- Consult a physician if you suspect any problems with your hearing.

use earphones. The concentrated sounds prematurely wear away nerve endings in the ear.

While hearing loss is inevitable over time, help is available to keep us in touch with the world around us, Dr. Slepian says. Some problems heal normally, but may require treatment *continued on page 4*

 **Euclid Hospital
Hillcrest Hospital
Huron Hospital
South Pointe Hospital**
Cleveland Clinic hospitals

**Need a physician? Call Medline for a referral
at 440/312-4533 or 800/621-0004.**

Eat and Run

How to eat healthy when you're on the go



Finally, you're home after a busy day. It's dinnertime, and rather than reaching for your cookbook, you reach for the phone book to make reservations. But being short on time—or energy—doesn't mean you must forgo a healthy meal at home. You just have to know where to start.

Stock Up

To minimize the time it takes to plan a meal, keep your cupboard stocked with healthy ingredients that can be easily incorporated into various dishes. Load up on items with a long shelf life, such as brown rice, tomato sauce, canned tuna/salmon, beans, olive oil and soup broth. Also have healthy, but perishable items on hand, such as fresh fruits and vegetables, lean meats, low-fat dairy products and whole-grain breads. Just be sure to buy only as much as you'll use.

Plan Ahead

Sometimes the most difficult part of making a meal is deciding what to make. Here are some quick and healthy meal ideas:

Breakfast:

- Whole-grain toast topped with peanut butter, a half of a grapefruit and a glass of low-fat milk
- Low-fat yogurt mixed with whole-grain cereal and a glass of fresh-squeezed orange juice

Lunch:

- A pita pocket stuffed with turkey, lettuce and tomato; a small container of fruit; and a low-fat cheese stick
- A pre-made salad topped with tomatoes, garbanzo beans and low-fat cheese—all tossed with a vinegar-based dressing

Dinner:

- Stir-fried chicken and vegetables over brown rice (tip: buy precooked chicken strips and pre-cut vegetables)
- Whole-wheat or spinach pasta tossed with vegetables and tomato sauce

Source: aarp.org •

Drive-Through Dilemma

If fast food is your only option between errands, never fear. Believe it or not, you can find a healthy meal on almost any order board.

Know your weaknesses. If you just can't resist the Big Mac, skip the golden arches altogether and go somewhere less tempting, like a sandwich shop where you can choose your ingredients.

Don't be fooled. Just because it's called a salad doesn't mean it's healthy. Some fast-food salads can pack more calories than a burger and fries. Consult the nutrition information before ordering.

Customize your order. As a paying customer, you have every right to ask for your order to be specially made. Order a grilled-chicken sandwich with extra lettuce and tomatoes, minus the mayonnaise.

Source: *American Dietetic Association*



Functional Junctions

Keep your joints ready for action all summer long

The sunny season brings with it opportunity for outdoor activity—and injury, if you're not careful. Protect your joints from arthritis all year with these recommendations from the Arthritis Foundation:

Talk to your doctor. You don't have to suffer in silence. Many arthritis treatments are available, so the sooner your condition is diagnosed and treatment begins, the better.

Avoid strain. It may sound like a no-brainer, but it's too important not to mention. Stress to your joints causes painful damage to your cartilage. Use assistive devices such as rolling luggage, and maintain a healthy weight.

Reach for the stars (or at least your toes). Stretching your muscles keeps them loose and flexible. Sign up for a yoga class or perform simple

stretches on your own at home. Hold each position for 10 seconds (don't bounce), release, then repeat.

Get moving. Having arthritis means you should quit working out, right? Wrong. Having arthritis means exercise is more important

than ever. It strengthens the muscles, relieving the pressure on your bones and joints. Take up a low-impact activity such as swimming or fit physical activity into your daily routine by walking after dinner, taking the stairs or washing the car. ●



A Bevy of Benefits

Pop quiz: Which of the following privileges are included in your Senior Circle Plus membership?

- social trips and gatherings
- health and wellness lectures
- discounts on hospital parking, hospital cafeteria dining, hearing



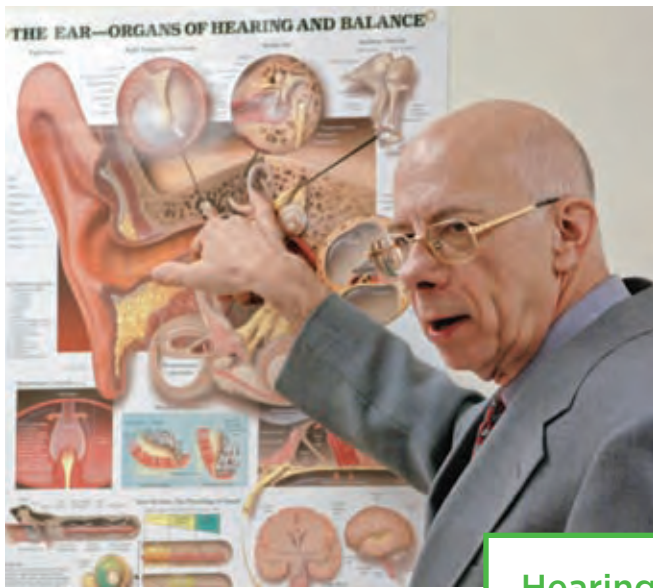
aids, eyeglasses, hospital gift shop purchases, prescription drug membership

- health screenings
- assistance with insurance forms
- exercise programs

If you answered “all of the above,” you're right! Remember to carry your Senior Circle Plus membership card with you at

all times so that you can take advantage of these benefits. Your membership is good at all Cleveland Clinic hospitals.

To learn more about your Senior Circle Plus benefits—and to obtain your membership card, simply call toll-free 866/YES-CCHS (937-2247) or visit us online: cchs.net/seniorcircle. ●



Dr. Slepian explains the workings of the inner ear.

possible consultations about hearing aids. Some patients who experience hearing problems make their own appointments with an audiologist, and some hospitals offer free hearing screenings.

Part of the test involves placing a patient inside a booth while wearing a special set of earphones. A series of tones are presented through the earphones to determine the patient's hearing level.

"We also test to determine how clearly the patient understands speech," Snyderwine says. "People may hear sounds, but not know what's being said." These tests help hearing specialists identify any treatment needed, and are also helpful in determining if a hearing aid would be helpful, and (if so) what type.

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if the conditions persist. An unusual buildup of wax can be softened and made easier for physicians to remove with eardrops, mineral oil or even baby oil. Bacterial infections can be treated with antibacterial solutions. Sometimes even damaged eardrums will heal themselves. Surgery may be needed for eardrums that do not heal—as well as to replace damaged bones in the inner ear or remove abnormal growths in the ear, Dr. Slepian says.

Testing 1, 2, 3

Primary care physicians often refer patients who complain about difficulty hearing or persistent ringing in their ears to specialists like Dr. Slepian for an evaluation. Dr. Slepian may refer patients to an audiologist to weigh his initial diagnosis, and for

Hearing Help

Hearing screenings are available at no charge by a licensed audiologist at Euclid and South Pointe hospitals, Severance Medical Center and the Sagamore Hills Medical Center.

Senior Circle Plus members receive a 15 percent discount on both programmable and digital hearing aids. For an appointment, call **216/692-8760**.

Carol Snyderwine, supervisor of audiology for Euclid, Hillcrest, Huron and South Pointe hospitals, says a series of tests are conducted for the middle and inner ear to determine the cause and extent of hearing problems. The results help physicians determine the treatment needed. Equipment even allows patients to view their inner ear.

Music to Your Ears

Hearing aids—whether they are the traditional or the more sophisticated and expensive digital type—are available to suit the taste and need of any consumer, Snyderwine says. Depending on their sophistication, hearing aids can provide a few or many options to help patients adjust the volume of sound they are exposed to or filter out unwanted sound.

Hearing aids also have become smaller, more discreet and more comfortable. And patients increasingly use them in both ears rather than just one, which was more common 20 years ago. But, ultimately, they all are aids. "You can't expect to be given back what you were born with," Snyderwine says. ●

The information contained in *Senior Circle Plus* is for educational purposes only and should not be relied upon as medical advice. It has not been designed to replace a physician's medical assessment and medical judgment.