

Audiology Newsletter

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Christmas 2011

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CHRISTMAS CLOSURE DATES:

21st December 2011-
6th January 2012

Bluetooth

Often, when people hear the terms "*wireless*" or "*Bluetooth*" they think of state-of-the-art technology but don't really know how it works and how it is useful in helping those with hearing loss.



Bluetooth allows communication between different devices without the need for cords and wires through the use of short wavelength radio signals. Bluetooth systems allow for the set-up of tiny networks that connect Bluetooth enabled devices over distances from 5 to 100 metres. Bluetooth technology is now used for wireless communication between computers and the mouse, keyboard, printers, wireless controllers for game consoles such as Wii and Playstation systems, digital cameras and GPS.

Bluetooth is an extremely useful tool in hearing aids as it allows for signals to be sent directly to them from Bluetooth enabled devices. An interface is required as a go-between the hearing aids and devices. The interface is typically a lightweight device worn around the neck/ in a pocket/ held by hand that wirelessly connects directly to the hearing aid. This allows people to answer mobile telephone calls, listen to music via MP3 players and receive auditory input through laptops.

Hearing aid manufacturers all use different names for the interface, such as "*streamer*" or "*DEX*" or "*Unite*", but they are all doing the same thing—wirelessly connecting the hearing aid to Bluetooth devices.

Wireless Hearing Aids

There have been many new releases of wireless hearing aids this year by all hearing aid manufacturers.

The wireless accessories help people with hearing loss connect to people, news and music. With the wireless accessories people can hear their television, mobile phone, stereo and other devices in a clear, comfortable and dependable way. The underlying technology gives many advantages:

- **Smart:** Transmits sound directly to hearing aids
- **Discreet:** Nothing uncomfortable or bulky to wear
- **Easy-to-use:** Install it and forget about it
- **Safe:** Proven technology used for many years for other products

TELEVISION

A television "*streamer*" sends crystal-clear stereo sound directly to the hearing aids from televisions, computers, stereos and other audio devices. Now people with hearing loss do not have to watch television alone or feel that they are disturbing family members with the volume turned up. The streamer connects into the audiojack at the back of the television / audio device and wirelessly transmits the sound to the hearing aid, so there's no need to wear anything extra. The person simply pushes a button. Devices typically have a range of seven metres.

MOBILE PHONE CLIP

The phone clip sends the sound from the mobile phone to the hearing aid, so the person does not have to hold the phone to their ear. The clip allows talking on the phone to be automatic, effortless and reliable. All the person has to do is press the answer button on the phone clip and start talking. The phone clip gives a wireless connection between the Bluetooth enabled mobile phone and the hearing aids. The device is the size of a matchbox and clips on to clothing or a car's sun visor. The mobile phone can be left in a bag or pocket during use.



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MINI MICROPHONE

Most people with hearing loss have trouble hearing in background noise. Following group conversations in restaurants can be very frustrating, embarrassing and tiring.

The mini microphone is a wireless device that allows the person to hear speech clearly up to seven metres away. The mini mic is on a small clip that can be worn by an individual communication partner or placed in the middle of a table if it is a group conversation. The mini mic sends speech directly to the hearing aids thereby reducing background noise significantly. It is also excellent in lecture situations; the mini mic clips on to the lecturer's shirt and the listener can directly hear their voice up to seven metres away.

REMOTE CONTROL

A remote control can also be used to change volume and programs. This gives the wearer much control over their listening environment.

Two Ears

Nature has given us two ears designed to work together.

Most hearing aid manufacturers have now released hearing aids that wirelessly communicate directly with each other. The communication between the hearing aids is instant and constant.

Put simply, the wireless technology in hearing aids mean people hear real surround sound in real time.

The key benefits of two ears are:

- More natural sound quality
- Easier listening in background noise
- Sound location

Waterproof Hearing Aids

In June 2011 Siemens launched the *Aquaris* hearing aid—this is the first truly waterproof hearing aid to be released. The aid is:

- **Waterproof:** completely sealed housing shell and battery door. IP57 certified: waterproof up to 3 feet / 1 metre for 30 minutes.
- **Sweat and dust resistant:** efficiently repels dust, perspiration and dirt. Housing safeguards against corrosion.
- **Shockproof:** virtually shockproof due to ergonomic shape and soft-touch lacquering. Scratch-proof non-slip soft rubber surface. Attachable Sport Clip for extra security.



Captioned Mobile Phones

Many people with hearing loss rely on captioning to watch television programs or movies. People also rely on text messaging when using their mobile phone. Now there is an exciting new service in the USA. Mobile Caption Service allows individuals who have difficulty hearing to talk directly to the people they call on their Nokia E5 mobile phone and read what is spoken by the other person.

This technology is yet to be released in Australia.

In the meantime, people with hearing loss who have upgraded their mobile phone to the new iPhone report they have noticed a significant increase in the sound quality.

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“LIKE” The Butterfly Effect

The Butterfly Effect campaign was a Facebook campaign run by Queensland-based Hear and Say encouraging Facebook users to visit the Hear and Say page and register that they “liked” the Butterfly Effect. For every “like” Suncorp donated \$1. Fans were encouraged to share with their friends the Hear and Say children’s experiences and journeys into the hearing world as they were progressively posted onto the Facebook page during the campaign period—demonstrating the Butterfly Effect! The promotion generated 20,000 “likes” resulting in a \$20,000 donation from Suncorp.

Food For Hearing

Studies show possible links between nutrition and hearing loss. By including the foods listed here in your daily diet, you are taking steps to improve not only your hearing but your general health too.

Vitamin D is responsible for the absorption of calcium, which is required for us to have strong bones. Lack of this vitamin causes osteopenia in adults, a condition where the bones of the ears harden and become porous.

Sources of Vitamin D: Cod liver oil, fish, oil, salmon, mackerel, tuna fish, liver and egg yolk.

Vitamin A works in combination with **Vitamin C** and **E** and **magnesium** to prevent the formation of free radicals (highly reactive substances) that form during noise exposure.

Sources of Vitamin A: Broccoli, squash, spinach, turnip greens, carrots, rockmelon, sweet potato, pumpkin, apricots, liver, milk, butter, cheese, and whole eggs.

Sources of Vitamin C: Broccoli, green and red capsicum, cauliflower, cabbage, collard greens, brussel sprouts, lemon, pineapple, strawberries and citrus fruits.

Sources of Vitamin E: Wheat germ, green leafy vegetables, margarine and vegetable oil.

Sources of Magnesium: Dairy products, meat, fish, poultry, green vegetables and legumes.

Vitamin B12 helps improve hearing by regulating the formation of red blood cells, assisting in the metabolism of homocysteine and preventing tinnitus.

Sources of Vitamin B12: Dairy products, eggs, lean beef and shellfish.

Folic Acid lowers the production of homocysteine, which is thought to be the cause of some types of hearing loss and boosts circulation of blood to the inner structures of the ear.

Sources of Folic Acid: Beef, liver, spinach, asparagus, green peas, broccoli, avocado, lettuce, peanuts, tomato juice, whole eggs, strawberries, paw paw, banana and rockmelon.

Manganese improves hearing because it aids in the formation of connective tissues and bones, plus it is also necessary for the normal functioning of the brain and nerves. If you have low levels of manganese, you will likely be suffering from tinnitus.

Sources of Manganese: Apples, apricots, avocados, beans, pineapples, berries, raisins, celery, egg yolks, legumes and pine nuts.

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I get so much satisfaction from my work and I am extremely appreciative of you all for your support and trust.

I wish you and your families a happy, safe and festive Christmas. I look forward to seeing you all in the New Year.

Warmest Regards,

Bronwen

CHRISTMAS CLOSURE

Please note, during the Christmas period the rooms will be closed from Wednesday 21st December, 2011 and reopen on Monday 6th January, 2012.



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