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Northwestern University Audiology Clinic
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Don't Let Hearing Loss Dampen Family Festivities *Continued...*

health can lead to increased feelings of isolation and even depression.

Many people experience depression during the holiday season for a variety of reasons, including health problems. Adults who suffer from untreated hearing loss are more likely to report feelings of depression and anxiety than those whose hearing loss has been treated.*

How to Offer Support and Encouragement

Family members and friends can encourage those with hearing loss to do something about it. Here are some suggestions:

- **Let them know they are not alone.** One in six baby boomers (ages 46-66) have a hearing problem, and one in 14 Generation Xers (ages 30-45) already have hearing loss.**

- **Discuss advancements in technology.** Today's digital hearing instruments are not what most people expect. They can best be compared to tiny, yet highly sophisticated sound studios – processing and reproducing sounds faithfully.

- **Dispel myths.** Just because someone has hearing loss, it does not mean he or she is going deaf. However, it is important to see a hearing healthcare professional to find the cause of the hearing loss and prevent it from worsening. Show them their hearing is important. Hearing loss can occur gradually – sometimes over many years. Perhaps they have forgotten how important hearing is to their quality of life. Reminiscing together about special gatherings may remind them of the times they, too, enjoyed the holiday bustle.

* Source: National Council on Aging.
** Source: Better Hearing Institute.

Hearing Health News

from Northwestern University Audiology Clinic

Winter 2012

Welcome from Dr. Novak



As clinic manager, Dr. Novak takes special pride in welcoming you to the clinic. Dr. Novak received her Master of Science in Audiology from Gallaudet University in Washington D.C. and her Doctorate of Audiology from A.T. Still University of Health Sciences. Dr. Novak has been providing personalized clinical services at Northwestern University since 1998. She enjoys all areas of audiology with a special interest in hearing aids and rehabilitation. Dr. Novak adapts her approach to fitting hearing aids to meet each individual patient's requirements. She is well known throughout the community for her Communication and Hearing Enhancement Course where our patients learn how to communicate more comfortably and effectively through a combination of individualized and classroom instruction. If your hearing abilities are changing, Dr. Novak will help you learn how to best communicate despite those changes.

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Hearing Evaluation: Why Friends & Relatives Will Benefit

We all know people who miss the point of a conversation due to a hearing problem. Communicating with these folks can be frustrating for you but even worse for the person with a hearing problem. Indeed hearing problems are a leading cause of social isolation and depression. Encourage those you know with hearing problems to make an appointment to have their hearing evaluated. Need more reasons? Consider these statistics:

Both young and old suffer from hearing loss

- **Hearing loss is the 3rd most common chronic condition among older Americans and 40% of people ages 65 and older are hearing impaired.**
- **About 1 in 5 of today's teenagers already suffer from some degree of hearing loss and are at risk for developing significant hearing loss.**

Many with hearing loss are not being helped

- **90 percent of people with hearing loss can benefit from hearing devices, but only 25 percent currently use them.**

The loss is more than a hearing loss

- **Americans who ignore their hearing problems are losing \$100 billion a year in earnings.**
- **If your friends and relatives are having difficulty communicating with you they are probably missing critical information elsewhere such as at work or the doctor's office and that could have significant consequences.**

Treatment helps

- **Early treatment may reduce the impact of hearing loss on quality of life and may improve eventual outcomes with hearing devices.**
- **Treating hearing loss early may preserve brain function.**

Encouraging or even accompanying your friends and relatives to Northwestern University Audiology Clinic is a significant act of kindness and concern that will create a win-win situation for them and you. We look forward to the opportunity to provide everyone you recommend with a comfortable, personalized experience and the best hearing healthcare available.

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New Year's Resolutions



The holiday season is an especially busy time in our office due to the heightened awareness of hearing loss among family members due to holiday gatherings. With all the festivities and time with family members, the frustrations with untreated hearing loss become more apparent to family members, as well as those with hearing loss.

Those with hearing loss who have had enough show up to our office to finally take that first step to better hearing. Sadly many who need to don't, and as a

result stop attending family events because they cannot hear or understand conversations.

Nearly 30 million people in America currently have a treatable hearing loss, yet less than a fifth of those have done anything about it. Untreated hearing loss causes loss of income, health problems, and social isolation. While hearing aids cannot restore "perfect hearing", they are the best form of treatment for putting the person with hearing loss back in control of their lives and enjoying the family festivities once again.

Don't let another Holiday Season or family gathering go by with untreated hearing loss. Make a New Years resolution to get help for your hearing. You and your family will be happy you did.

Sycle Marketing Group

Communication and Hearing Enhancement Course

If your hearing abilities are changing, we will help you learn how to best communicate despite those changes through individualized and classroom instruction at Northwestern University Audiology Clinic. The course consists of six two-hour sessions. The first hour meets in a small group and the second hour meets one-on-one with a graduate clinician supervised by an audiologist. You will learn the following: the importance of lip and speech reading and how to do it, communication strategies to use in difficult to hear situations, the

causes of hearing loss and how to manage hearing loss, the effects of hearing loss on socialization and emotions, hearing aids and what they can and cannot do for you, and about assistive listening devices that can improve your listening and communications skills. Course participants tell us this course has improved their ability to communicate and their quality of life. To join us call Marla at 847-491-3165 or email m-ross4@northwestern.edu.

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Don't Let Hearing Loss Dampen Family Festivities

If you have a family member or friend with hearing loss, the holidays bring unique challenges. While many people look forward all year to family gatherings and holiday parties, those with hearing loss may feel apprehensive or anxious.

One of the first signs of hearing loss is difficulty hearing in noisy environments. It can be especially difficult to understand speech over background noise like dinner music or a football game on TV. This is due to high-tone, nerve-type hearing loss that affects consonant sounds (necessary to understand words) that are in high frequencies.

It can be confusing because in quiet environments, a person may be able to hear and understand speech just fine. But add background noise, and he or she may only hear a low drone and miss the high-frequency sounds of speech.

"Just Getting By" Means Missing Out
It's estimated that 10% of the U.S. population has hearing loss. Many don't know they have a hearing problem or are reluctant to seek help. They may feel embarrassed or think they can "just get by" without treatment. But that means asking others to constantly repeat themselves, feeling left out of conversations and not fully participating in festivities that could create cherished

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Future Doctors of Audiology



Who are those young folks in white coats?

They are Northwestern University first year doctoral students training to be Doctors of Audiology.

Audiology was conceived as a profession about 60 years ago here at Northwestern University and we continue to be one of the nation's top training centers for future Doctors of Audiology as well as the longest continuously operating audiology clinic in the nation.

We teach these select students by example: providing patients with personal and professional care of the highest quality. So both you and these students benefit. This clinical training together with our historic founding of audiology and outstanding hearing research programs make Northwestern University Audiology Clinic a national treasure.

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Have friends or relatives whose hearing is changing?

Please accept this limited time offer exclusive for our newsletter readers!

FREE
6-Week Course
Communication & Hearing Enhancement

\$175 Value!
Six two-hour classes
Tues. 10 am - Noon,
Winter 2012 (1/17 - 2/21)

Bring a partner. Learn how to hear better
with or without a hearing aid. Free trial of hearing aids
available for nonusers. Call (847) 491-3165 or
E-mail m-ross4@northwestern.edu. Mention coupon.

Hurry! Offer good until course is full. Reserve a place in class today.