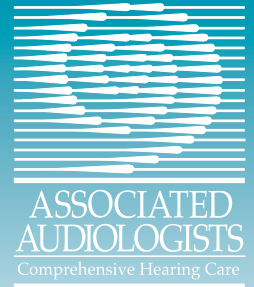


HEARING

YOUR BEST



Information From Associated Audiologists, Inc. – “Hearing Your Best for Life”

Vol. 12, Issue 2

How to Make a Smart Hearing Aid Purchase

Purchasing hearing aids in today's market can be confusing, to say the least. Newspaper and direct mail advertisements, as well as online marketing and advice from well-meaning friends and relatives can make it difficult to separate fact from fiction.

“In today's economy, many individuals are focused on their budget, and that's very important,” says Tim Steele, Ph.D., FAAA, president of Associated Audiologists. “But there are so many variables that can affect the price of hearing aids, it can be tough to compare apples to apples. It's definitely not the same as shopping for a new kitchen appliance. A hearing aid can impact your daily living, relationships and even your income, so you want to be sure you make the best choice for your situation.”

If you're tempted by low-price offers, Dr. Steele advises you to be wary of discounts on manufacturer's suggested retail prices (MSRP) or free trials on non-custom devices fit without verification. Also avoid ads promoting clinical studies for hearing aids. These are marketing tactics to lure consumers in for hearing aids that have already passed the FDA protocols for public release.

“Because some hearing devices may not be customized for your hearing loss, they aren't effective or safe. We see a lot of people who have purchased hearing aids elsewhere, but give up on wearing



them because they just don't work properly. Sometimes the technology is good, but was just never fit appropriately to that individual, and sometimes it just isn't what the person needed. Remember, you get what you pay for, and if the price sounds too good to be true, it probably is,” Dr. Steele advises. “Ask your audiologist if he or she uses real-ear probe microphone and speech mapping measures to verify how well the hearing aid is functioning in your ear.”

And while technology is important, success with hearing aids is often related to the relationship you establish with an experienced audiologist. “Whether you work with a member of our staff, or someone else, be sure you find a professional you can trust who is university-trained, abides by a professional code of ethics and will adjust and service your hearing aids after the sale. Most technologies have millions of adjustable parameters and the training and knowledge of your audiologist is critical, like that of a pilot



Continued on page 7 ►

To discuss your hearing healthcare needs with an audiologist, call any of our offices near you.

HEARING YOUR BEST



Hear Here...

By Tim Steele, Ph.D., FAAA, President,
Associated Audiologists, Inc.

It was a pleasure to be a guest at the 100-year celebration of Sertoma, which held its national convention in Kansas City this April. Sertoma, an acronym for "Service to Mankind," is a service organization with clubs all over the United States and Canada. As a part of its mission to provide public awareness about hearing loss and serve individuals with hearing health problems, they have just launched a campaign to help educate and fund hearing loops in public venues across the country.

A day doesn't go by in our clinics where someone doesn't mention having difficulty hearing at a large public venue. Even with today's advanced hearing aid technology, there are some places where it is difficult to hear. A hearing loop allows individuals with t-coil equipped hearing aid technology to use their hearing aids to directly hear sound from the speaker system. This overcomes the negative effects of poor acoustics and distance, providing a clear signal to the listener. Hearing loops can transform difficult listening environments for individuals with hearing loss and those who wear hearing aids.

We have installed hearing loops in our three reception areas at our Prairie Village, Shawnee Mission, and Overland Park clinics. We will also be hosting a special workshop with a session highlighting hearing loops at the Olathe Holiday Inn on Tuesday, Sept. 25. Associated Audiologists helped provide the hearing loop installed at the hotel. We invite you to stop by the office or register for the seminar to learn more at 913-403-0018.

Dr. Wise and I have a vision of creating a "Hearing Friendly Community" wherever you live. I would love for those interested in this grassroots effort to help advocate for hearing friendly communities to e-mail me at tim@hearingyourbest.com, or leave me a voice message at 913-498-2827. Like Sertoma, let's work together to educate, advocate, and improve access for anyone living with hearing loss.

We're Changing to Serve You Better!

The staffs of our Overland Park and Leavenworth offices have been busy this spring with a major move and a remodeling project, respectively.

Leavenworth Office Expands

In an effort to continue to provide an outstanding patient experience, we have recently expanded our Leavenworth office. The office is still located in the Cushing Medical Plaza, Suite 105, but it has received a fresh new look, including paint, carpet and artwork. The practice's sound booth also has received a "facelift." The office now includes an additional hearing aid fitting room and hearing aid lab.

"We invite our patients and the community to stop by and check out our newly remodeled office," says Erica Smith, Au.D., FAAA. "We'd love to show you around and discuss your hearing healthcare needs with you."

To schedule an appointment with Dr. Smith, call 913-682-1870.



Overland Park Office Update

In early May, we relocated our Overland Park office to the Southridge Medical Building, 12541 Foster Street, Suite 220, Overland Park. The new office is still located on the Saint Luke's South campus. (Please note: this move only affected the Saint Luke's South office).

"We're very excited about our new space," says Tim Steele, Ph.D., FAAA, president, Associated Audiologists. "We think those of you who are patients in Overland Park will love the easier parking and additional room we now have to serve you."

The new office also allows the practice to enhance its service to patients experiencing hearing loss, dizziness, imbalance and tinnitus. The office décor is reflective of a Kansas City theme featuring local landmarks and icons.

In addition, the practice has closed its Lenexa location at the Shawnee Mission Outpatient Pavilion and will concentrate its services at its other four offices. Stacey Baldwin, Au.D., FAAA, will continue to see patients at our new Overland Park office.

To schedule an appointment with Dr. Baldwin or any of the other audiologists serving our Overland Park office, call 913-498-2827.

Hearing Technology Update

Recent technology developments mean there are more options than ever before to help you hear your best! Three new options you may want to check out include:

> **Water-Resistant Solutions**—Water has long been the enemy of hearing aids, but several hearing aid manufacturers are now making water-resistant coatings for their products. While they aren't water-proof, these coatings are water, sweat, moisture and dust resistant and can help protect your hearing aids whether you're enjoying swimming, sports at the beach or just giving the dog a bath.



> **Widex Menu**—The Menu is a new hearing aid line that lets the audiologist select important features you need, yet not pay for those you don't. Menu hearing aids offer excellent sound quality and automatically adapt to your changing listening situations. They can also reduce noise, give you flexible control and work to help you hear the high-pitched sounds you may not have heard in years. "The Menu is a very exciting option for our patients who are interested in upgrading to the latest technology, but don't want to pay for features they don't use or are very budget conscious," says Jim Wise, Ph.D., FAAA, president emeritus, Associated Audiologists.

> **Widex Invisible in Canal (IIC), Oticon Intiga iLLC and the Phonak Nano**—These hearing aids are great options for individuals who want an invisible hearing aid solution. Because these models are so small, they can be placed deep in the ear canal, providing better sound and comfort. "These deep-fit, custom hearing aids can be good solutions for individuals interested in 'invisible' hearing aids that provide the maximum hearing performance in a minimum size," Dr. Wise says.

To find out more about any of the newest hearing aid technology available, talk with one of our audiologists today.

Organizations Discourage Online Hearing Tests and Hearing Aid Sales

In the last issue of our newsletter, we featured an article on the need for proper diagnosis before purchasing a hearing aid. The story focused on a major health insurance provider that encourages online hearing testing and allows the purchase of hearing aids via the Internet.



At the time of publication, the Academy of Doctors of Audiology, the American Academy of Audiology, the American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery, the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, and the International Hearing Society had issued a statement urging consumers who suspect they may have a hearing loss to seek treatment from a licensed audiologist or other hearing healthcare professional to ensure proper diagnosis and treatment of hearing loss, and to identify potentially serious underlying medical conditions. After this, the Food and Drug Administration issued a cease and desist letter to stop the online hearing testing.

Now, these same organizations have issued a letter to state health departments regarding the purchase of hearing aids over the counter or through the internet.

"This move just reinforces how important it is to have your hearing evaluated in person by a hearing health professional, such as an audiologist," says Tim Steele, Ph.D., FAAA, president, Associated Audiologists. "It is also critical to have hearing aids fit by highly trained audiologists using the equipment necessary to be successful with today's sophisticated hearing aid technology."

Associated Audiologists Welcomes Dr. Gonzales to Practice

Tammy Gonzales, Au.D., FAAA, recently joined Associated Audiologists, Inc. following her graduation from the University of Kansas-Medical Center. Dr. Gonzales performed her clinical externship with the practice. During her externship, Dr. Gonzales had the opportunity to specialize in dizziness and balance disorders.



“**B**eing dizzy or off balance can be scary for both the patient and their family,” Dr. Gonzales explains. “As an audiologist, I enjoy being able to work with patients to diagnose and treat their dizziness and balance disorders. There is nothing more rewarding than to influence a patient’s quality of life for the better by successfully treating and managing dizziness and/or balance disorders.

“I have always known that I want to dedicate my career to helping people,” Dr. Gonzales says. “My mother is an early childhood special education teacher and she taught me the value of serving others.”

Dr. Gonzales’ educational and professional associations include:

- Doctorate of Audiology, University of Kansas-Medical Center
- Member, Kansas Speech-Language-Hearing Association
- Member, Kansas City Society of Audiology
- Member, Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society
- Member, Golden Key Honor Society

Dr. Gonzales grew up in Oskaloosa, Kansas and received her bachelor’s of science in speech-language-hearing and communicative disorders from the University of Kansas. She currently lives in Olathe, Kansas with her husband, Patrick and two dogs. She enjoys reading, outdoor activities and spending time with her husband and family.

To schedule an appointment with Dr. Gonzales, call 913-498-2827. Dr. Gonzales and Sam Bittel, Au.D., FAAA, are seeing patients at both of our Shawnee Mission and Overland Park clinics.

For more information about Dr. Gonzales and Associated Audiologists, visit our Web site at www.hearingyourbest.com.

QUICK TIPS

Six Tips for Hearing Your Best in Restaurants

- 1 Pick your location carefully.** Select a quieter restaurant with carpeting, heavy window coverings and low ceilings. All of these insulators absorb sound and cut down on the echo effect that can interfere with your ability to hear clearly.
- 2 Communicate face-to-face.** It’s important that you face the person you are dining with. Even for persons with normal hearing, much of hearing in background noise is based on reading visual cues from lip movements, so the clearer you can see a person’s face, the better.
- 3 Timing is everything.** Schedule your meal before or after the lunch or dinner rush. Fewer people means less noise.
- 4 Don’t nod in agreement.** If you didn’t hear what your dining partner said, don’t be afraid to ask for clarification. That’s much better than being misinformed or agreeing to something you didn’t understand.
- 5 Ask for the best seat in the house.** Ask to be seated in a well-lit area, facing away from the sun. Again, you want to see your dining partner’s face clearly, not squint in the sunlight. You also should avoid being seated near the kitchen, bar or entrance, all typically noisier areas of restaurants.
- 6 Wear your hearing aids.** If you have hearing aids, be sure to wear them. There have been continued improvements in hearing aid technology that can help in backgrounds of noise. If you think your hearing aids may need to be adjusted or your hearing has changed, schedule an appointment with one of our board-certified, university-trained audiologists.

IT'S EASY Being Green!



Associated Audiologists is making it easy to be green, especially when it comes to hearing aid batteries!

Be sure to take advantage of our annual summer battery sale. The batteries featured during this once-a-year sale are mercury-free and offer the same benefits as older batteries containing mercury. This professional line of batteries provides superior performance to over-the-counter batteries, and work best with the digital technology and wireless connectivity features necessary for high-performing hearing aids. New special packaging is also "green," with 16-battery packs, cutting down on waste.

If you have questions, talk with your audiologist about the best batteries for your hearing aid.

GET MORE LIFE FROM YOUR BATTERIES

- ▶ Before putting your batteries in your hearing aid, remove the sticker and expose them to the air for at least 60 seconds. This charges the battery and can help you get 25 to 30 percent longer life from your batteries.
- ▶ Turn your hearing aids off at night, and when not in use.
- ▶ Batteries frequently have a longer shelf life when stored at room temperature. Don't keep them in the refrigerator and keep them out of direct sunlight or heat.
- ▶ An inexpensive battery tester is a good way to check your hearing aid battery's life.

To take advantage of our summer battery sale, use the coupons below.

Dehumidifier Sale

All electronic hearing aid dryers
10% OFF
regular price
with this coupon.



Exp. 9/30/2012

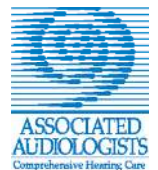
Battery Sale

HALF PRICE

Sizes 10, 13, 312 limited to 48 batteries *per person*.

Size 675 limited to 40 batteries *per person*.

While supplies last.



Exp. 9/30/2012

HEARING YOUR BEST

STAFF NEWS

Congratulations!

- Congratulations to **Laura Flowers, Au.D., FAAA**, and her husband Joe, on the recent birth of their third child, Sydney Marie, born June 20 and weighing in at 7 lbs., 13 oz. Big sister Chloe and big brother Max are very excited about the new addition to the family.



Dr. Flowers will return to work in September. While she is on family leave, Susan Smittkamp, Au.D., Ph.D., will see her patients. Dr. Smittkamp has extensive experience as an audiologist and has also served as a research assistant professor with the University of Kansas Medical Center.

- Congratulations to **Tanja Porter**, administrative support with our Shawnee Mission office, on celebrating 15 years with the practice! Tanja originally joined the Associated Audiologists office located in Olathe and is a well-known staff member to our many loyal patients.
- This newsletter, **Hearing Your Best**, was recently honored with an award of merit from the 29th Annual Healthcare Advertising Awards Competition. The winners were selected by a national panel of judges from more than 4,400 entries, making this one of the 10 largest of all advertising awards competitions in the world.

Hearing Your Best is produced regularly by our staff for the education and information of our patients and their families.

Consultants to the Kansas City Symphony

Associated Audiologists, Inc. is now serving as the audiology consultants to the Kansas City Symphony. Jim Wise, Ph.D., FAAA, has worked with the symphony on collaborative events through his charitable work with The Mission Project and became aware of the hearing, acoustic and educational needs of the symphony. "We are excited to be able to work collaboratively with the symphony in this new role and help provide them with input, advice, testing and hearing protection," Dr. Wise says. Stay tuned for more exciting information on this new arrangement with the Kansas City Symphony.



Extern Joins Associated Audiologists

Associated Audiologists is pleased to welcome **Elaine "Lainey" Bruhn** to the practice. As a requirement for the fourth year of the doctorate of audiology program at the University of Kansas Medical Center, Lainey is completing her clinical externship with us over the next year. She was selected for Associated Audiologists' competitive externship position.



Lainey received her bachelor's degree at Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois, where she played Division I college soccer for four years. She is from Leawood, Kansas and currently resides on the Country Club Plaza. She is also a graduate of Blue Valley West High School.

She anticipates graduating with her doctorate in audiology in May 2013. Lainey was the founding president of the Student Academy of Audiology at the University of Kansas Medical Center and is active with the Kansas City Sertoma Society.

On a Mission for Better Hearing Dana Jacobson, Au.D., FAAA,

recently spent the week of June 18-22 on a mission trip in Guatemala as part of Medical Missions Foundation. Dr. Jacobson worked with a team that performed pre-operative tests for patients in need of ear, nose and throat services. She evaluated patients for hearing loss and hearing aids, providing free hearing care for more than 150 patients during the week. Dr. Jacobson is a senior audiologist at the Overland Park office. Associated Audiologists sponsored her travel costs.



Professional Development

- **Tim Steele, Ph.D., FAAA**, president, Associated Audiologists, recently attended an invitation-only Widex Research Symposium held in Chicago, Ill.
- **Tim Steele, Ph.D., FAAA, Dave Nissen, Au.D., FAAA, Jim Wise, Ph.D., FAAA, Sam Bittel, Au.D., FAAA, and Erica Smith, Au.D., FAAA**, recently traveled to the American Academy of Audiology conference in Boston, Mass. to learn more about the latest hearing and balance research and products from throughout the world. Dr. Bittel also presented in the vestibular grand rounds presentation at the convention.

How to Be a Smart Hearing Aid Shopper Continued from page 1

navigating your safe flight,” Dr. Steele says. In fact, routine maintenance and regular monitoring of hearing and hearing aids are critical to success.

Dr. Steele adds that some providers don't work with your primary physician or health care provider, or don't provide essential services in their offices, such as ear wax removal. “Look for a full-service practice that can take care of all your needs,” Dr. Steele says. “You want to be sure your audiologist has a good working relationship with your doctor in case you have other medical issues that impact your hearing and health.”

He adds that the provider you choose should offer you a wide range of hearing aids from a number of respected manufacturers. Franchise or “chain” stores often do not provide this flexibility for consumers. In addition, some brands sold by chain stores can only be serviced at those stores and not by other providers.

“Look for a full-service practice that can take care of all your needs. You want to be sure your audiologist has a good working relationship with your doctor in case you have other medical issues that impact your hearing and health.”

— Dr. Tim Steele

Be sure the provider explains the differences in technology to you, as well as what's included in the cost of a hearing aid, such as adjustments and follow-up visits. “The cost of

hearing aids can vary widely depending on the level of technology,” Dr. Steele says. “More advanced technology with enhanced features will cost more than simpler technology.”

You also should make sure a hearing aid purchase includes an assessment period during which the hearing aid fee is either fully refundable, or has a minimum non-refundable amount, if the device isn't satisfactory. Be sure to ask about other options available if a particular device doesn't work out during the assessment period.

And finally, don't purchase a hearing aid online or by mail order. Hearing aids purchased online or through the mail are never custom fit or adjusted and may not be warrantied, may be difficult to get refunded, and in some cases take advantage of the online consumer.



Join the conversation! Find us on facebook.
www.facebook.com/HearingYourBest



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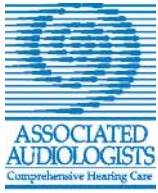
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information
about hearing
and balance
health from your
audiologist.

HEARING YOUR BEST



BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND!

Hearing and Balance Workshop!

Our Hearing and Balance Workshop has become so popular, we will offer three more workshops in the coming weeks.

Learn about the latest developments in hearing aid technology, how to find the right hearing professional, tips for purchasing hearing aids, improving telephone use, balance and dizziness issues, tinnitus and much, much more.

**Join the experts from
Associated Audiologists, Inc.
at one of these popular locations:**

Olathe • Tuesday, Sept. 25, 2012

Olathe Holiday Inn
101 W. 151st Street, Olathe, Kansas

913-403-0018

Leavenworth • Tuesday, Oct. 9, 2012

Riverfront Community Center
123 S. Esplanade St., Leavenworth, Kansas

913-682-1870

Overland Park • Wednesday, Oct. 24, 2012

Saint Luke's South Hospital, Conference Rooms A and B
12300 Metcalf, Overland Park, Kansas

913-498-2827

**Call for more information, to refer a friend to attend,
or to reserve your place at a FREE educational workshop.**