

SUMMER 2018

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# UNILATERAL Hearing Loss



If you would like to receive newsletters, reminder cards, or appointment reminders sent to you via email, please send an email to the Hearing Resources office at either one of these addresses:

[marie@entcentergr.com](mailto:marie@entcentergr.com)

[jill@entcentergr.com](mailto:jill@entcentergr.com)

You can also use either of these email addresses to order batteries for your hearing aids!

Let's discuss unilateral hearing loss. Unilateral hearing loss is having hearing loss in only one ear, while your other ear has normal hearing. We are going to go over with you who can have it, are all unilateral hearing losses the same, what are some of the difficulties if you have it, and what can be done for it.

### So, who can have unilateral hearing loss?

Anyone can! While some people are born with no hearing in one ear, others can develop it at any time. There is no single cause for this, but rather many different reasons as to why someone would develop a unilateral hearing loss. If this is something that you were born with, then it is most likely due to your genetic

makeup. If you were not born with this, then other possibilities include a trauma to one's head, such as getting into an auto accident and an object fractures your skull or even playing baseball as a child and getting hit in the head with a baseball. Noise exposure is another possibility. Maybe you are an avid outdoorsman and shoot firearms regularly, played in a band, or had a firecracker go off by your ear. Any of these types of loud noises, or anything similar in volume, can cause hearing loss. Medical

**Unilateral hearing loss is having hearing loss in only one ear, while your other ear has normal hearing.**

conditions are another possible cause. Examples such as Meniere's Disease, Otosclerosis, or a perforated ear drum could all cause hearing loss in

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one ear. Finally, there is something called sudden hearing loss. This is a hearing loss that happens instantly. You could be watching a TV show sitting on the couch and then all of the sudden your hearing goes out in one ear or you went to bed and could hear just fine and then woke up the next morning with no hearing in one ear. They are unsure of the cause of this, but often feel it could be some type of virus that attacks your inner ear.

### Are all unilateral hearing losses created equally?

The answer is no, they are not but let me explain why. First and foremost, there are varying degrees of hearing loss. Anything from a mild hearing loss to a profound loss. With a mild loss you can hear sounds and speech but just need them to be a little louder. With a profound loss, it wouldn't matter how loud the sounds are, you would not be able to hear them. Of course, there are many levels of hearing loss in between these as well. The type of hearing loss can vary as well. One could have a unilateral loss that is called a conductive hearing loss. This type of hearing loss is when the inner ear (nerve) is functioning fine, however something with the middle or outer ear is causing the loss. Examples of a conductive loss might be someone's ear is plugged with wax, or they have an ear infection, or they have problems with their bones in the middle ear and have Otosclerosis. The other type of hearing loss would be a sensorineural hearing loss. This type of loss is when the outer and middle

ear are functioning fine, however the inner ear is not. With this loss the hair cells in your cochlea start to not function well in processing the volume of sound. This type of loss is permanent in nature and no surgery or medication can be used to get it back. Finally, there could be a combination of a conductive loss and sensorineural loss which is called a mixed hearing loss. Mixed hearing losses could be due to your hair cells not functioning and then you have wax as well in your ear.

People with unilateral hearing losses will hear so much better if we look at them when we are talking to them.

### What are some of the difficulties someone with unilateral hearing loss will experience?

Well one of the biggest issues is that they lose their ability to localize where sounds are coming from. When you have a "good" ear it will sound like everything is coming from that side of your head. So, when you go into a crowded room and someone calls out your name, you will want to turn towards your good ear because that is the side your brain heard it loudest from, even when they are calling your name from the other direction. Also, background noise in general will be bothersome. You would notice more difficulty hearing conversations in restaurants or crowds. Tonal sound quality will sometimes be different. Sounds or speech may sound like they are coming from a broken speaker or bad radio with some static. You may have a feeling of fullness on the

side with hearing loss. Hearing loss has a sneaky way of masking itself, and making you feel like you have cotton stuffed in your ear or that your ear just needs to pop.

### Now what can be done for unilateral hearing loss?

Well first off, if this is something that happened suddenly you should see an ENT physician ASAP to see if there is a possible treatment for it. Otherwise most unilateral hearing losses can be helped by hearing aids. Depending on the loss you may be eligible for a traditional hearing aid. There is also a CROS hearing system that may be beneficial for you. This type of system is one where you wear a small microphone (that looks like a hearing aid) on your bad ear and that microphone will deliver the sound wirelessly to a device on your good ear. Then there is the option of a BAHA (Bone Anchored Hearing Aid) system. This is a device that is surgically implanted into your skull and will transmit the sound via bone conduction. This is only appropriate for a small portion of the population and it is not to be confused with the cochlear implant, which is not for unilateral hearing losses. Finally, people with unilateral hearing losses will hear so much better if we look at them when we are talking to them. Do not turn your head away from them while you are talking or start a conversation from another room. Try and face them while speaking with them for optimal hearing results.

If you have any further questions regarding unilateral hearing loss please contact our office.

# Better Speech & Hearing Month

**Did you know that May is Better Speech and Hearing Month?** At Hearing Resources we believe that hearing health is important all year round. In May, audiologists all over the country try to raise even more awareness about hearing and the important role it plays in our lives. Here are some facts to consider if you feel like you or someone you love is having trouble hearing:

- Less than 25% of adults with significant hearing loss use hearing aids.<sup>1</sup>
- On average, it takes people 7 years to seek treatment for hearing loss from the time they feel they are affected.
- Hearing loss can make it more difficult to interact with peers and can lead to decreased social engagement, depression, or bad moods.<sup>1</sup>
- There is a strong relationship between hearing loss and depression among US adults of all ages (18 and older).<sup>2</sup>
- Untreated hearing loss, social isolation, and depression can all contribute to an overall poorer quality of life.



Hearing is a social sense. It's what keeps us connected to family and friends. If you or someone you know has symptoms of hearing loss don't let it go untreated. Please call and schedule an appointment with one of our audiologists.

## REFERENCES

Lin, Frank R., and Marilyn Albert. "Hearing Loss and Dementia - Who's Listening?" Aging & Mental Health, U.S. National Library of Medicine, Aug. 2014, [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4075051/](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4075051/).

Li C, Zhang X, Hoffman HJ, Cotch MF, Themann CL, Wilson MR. Hearing Impairment Associated With Depression in US Adults, National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey 2005-2010. JAMA Otolaryngol Head Neck Surg. 2014;140(4):293-302. doi:10.1001/jamaoto.2014.42

## HARC

There is a wonderful resource here in West Michigan. They are located down in Portage, MI but they are used across the entire United States. HARC is a great resource for any type of assistive listening device, whether is be an amplified phone, smoke detector, alarm clock, or something for the TV. They have a store with knowledgeable staff or you can view items online or even request a catalog from them. Their website is **[www.HARC.com](http://www.HARC.com)** and their phone number is **1-800-445-9968**.



# Hearing Resources

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**BATTERY SALE!**  
**BOGO Free Box**  
**June 11 – 22, 2018 only**  
**- limit one box -**

## Questions & Answers

**Q. When do I need to replace my Dri-aid jar?**

**A.** *Dri-aid jars are typically good for 12-18 months. When they are new the blue beads in them will be a vibrant color. After awhile the color of the blue will begin to fade. You will be able to reactivate the beads following the directions on the jar. Around the 12-18 month period you will notice that the blue color will not stay vibrant for very long, maybe a week or less. At this point it is time to purchase a new jar.*



## Summer Specials!

### Dry Air for Wet Hearing Aids

The Dri-Aid Jar is excellent for removing damaging moisture from your hearing aids. Moisture is problematic for hearing aids in areas of high humidity – and when perspiration occurs. When you store your aids at night in the jar, the moisture is absorbed by the crystals in the jar thus preventing rust and corrosion from damaging the circuitry.

- Protects your valuable hearing aid.
- Extends the life of your hearing aid.
- Dri-aid pellets can be reactivated over and over again. Lasting anywhere from 12-18 months.
- Compact size- ideal for home or travel.

**Dri-Aid Jar Specials**  
**June 11 – 22, 2018**  
**\$5 off a Single Jar**

