

Sound News

July 2015

Volume 9 number 7

Sudden Hearing Loss: Getting to the Bottom of It

Lisa Packer, staff writer for Healthy Hearing

Imagine you woke up one morning and couldn't hear out of one ear. Would you know what to do? Would you seek treatment? Unfortunately, for most people the answer to both of these questions is a resounding no.

Every year, one out of every 5000 adults experiences sudden onset hearing loss. Also known as sudden sensorineural hearing loss, or SSHL, sudden onset hearing loss occurs all at once or over the course of several days. For most people, the immediate assumption is that they are suffering from allergies, an earwax blockage or sinus infection, so they might decide not to seek treatment. But here's what you need to know: Sudden onset hearing loss is considered a medical emergency, and prompt treatment might just save your hearing.

Ototoxic medications can be a contributing factor in sudden hearing loss. But how do you know you have it? SSHL doesn't always manifest itself in the same way. Some people notice when they wake up first thing in the morning that their hearing is different. Others don't notice a difference until they hold the phone up to that particular ear or try to listen to headphones. In some cases SSHL is preceded by a very noticeable "pop," which can be quite alarming. Afterward, some patients report a feeling of fullness in the affected ear or a strange feeling on that side of the head, possibly accompanied by tinnitus and dizziness.

SSHL differs from other types of

hearing loss in a couple of important ways. Aside from its rapid onset, it is often idiopathic, meaning the cause is usually unknown. As a matter of fact, a cause can be identified in only 10 to 15 % of diagnosed cases. Possible known causes, however, include:

- Tumors** (e.g. acoustic neuroma)
- Neurologic diseases or disorders** (e.g. multiple sclerosis)
- Bacterial infections**
- Head injury or trauma**
- Inner ear disorders** (e.g. Meniere's)
- Autoimmune diseases** (e.g. rheumatoid arthritis)
- Ototoxic medications**
- Circulation issues** (e.g. vasculitis)

One of the most common theories, however, is that SSHL is caused by a viral infection of the hearing nerve. The swelling that occurs in the affected nerve causes it to effectively become strangled in the narrow, bony canal that leads to the ear (the internal auditory canal). If it stays in that state for too long, the nerve dies. That is why it is so important to seek immediate treatment; the window of time during which hearing can be saved in these cases is very narrow.

Nine out of 10 occurrences of SSHL are unilateral, meaning the hearing loss only occurs in one ear. It is thought that SSHL affects about one in 5000 people every year, though that number could be much higher due to the number of cases that go unreported and undiagnosed. Men and women are affected equally, and the average age of first occurrence is typically mid-40s to mid-50s.

Make an appointment with a hearing healthcare professional. She may conduct a hearing test called pure tone audiometry in order to see whether hearing loss exists. The test can distinguish between two things: whether the sound is reaching the ear or whether the ear is processing the received sound. The test can also determine the range of hearing loss in decibels. SSHL will be diagnosed in the case of a hearing loss of at least 30 decibels in at least three connected frequencies. After diagnosis, she may order further tests in an attempt to determine an underlying cause. Blood tests, MRIs and balance tests are just a few examples that might help get to the bottom of your hearing loss.

Although treatments for SSHL are still fairly limited, they are important; 85 percent of those who receive prompt medical attention regain some or all of their hearing. Corticosteroids are the most common treatment for SSHL. They work by helping the body fight illness, decreasing swelling and reducing inflammation. Usually administered in pill form, the steroids can also be given through an injection behind the eardrum. This treatment via injection, called intratympanic corticosteroid therapy, is recommended for those who are unable to take oral steroids. Both treatments are equally effective,

(continued p 4)

Leone's Line



Your only lose energy when life becomes dull in your mind. Your mind gets bored and therefore tired of doing nothing.

Get interested in something. Get absolutely enthralled in something! Get out of yourself. Be somebody! Do something.

The more you lose yourself in something bigger than yourself, the more energy you will have.

Norman Vincent Peale

This is SO right on!!

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True or False? *Healthy Hearing*

Your brain is involved in your ability to hear

True. Hearing aids help our brain distinguish which sounds to focus on and which sounds are okay to ignore.

Our ears collect noise and funnel it to the inner ear, where sensory hair cells translate it into electrical impulses. From there, it's sent along the auditory nerve for our brain to interpret as recognizable sound.

When those sensory hair cells are damaged or die, they are unable to correctly process the noise they receive. The resulting sensorineural hearing loss is usually treatable with hearing aids – and the sooner the better. Older adults with untreated hearing loss lost an average of a cubic centimeter of brain tissue each year compared to those with normal hearing.

Hearing aids will restore my hearing to normal.

False. Hearing devices cannot restore normal hearing.

I can buy hearing aids for my ears just like I can buy reading glasses for my eyes from the drug store.

False. Only a hearing healthcare professional can accurately test your hearing and prescribe treatment. If you have sensorineural hearing loss, you may be a good candidate for hearing aids – although the type of hearing aid that's best for you will depend upon the degree of hearing loss you have, along with your lifestyle and other preferences.

If you have conductive hearing loss, you may not need amplification at all. Restoring your hearing may be as simple as removing excess ear wax or a benign tumor. Hearing loss may also signal the onset of other medical problems, such as diabetes or cardiovascular disease.

My hearing health can be negatively affected by the foods I eat.

True Hearing health depends on proper nutrition to operate at its best. Obesity and excessive drinking are detrimental to your hearing health. You need exercise and good nutrition.

Members: if you have changed your e-mail address please notify Karin Smith of the change karinsm@efn.org

Hearing Loss Assoc.-Lane County, Oregon Information calls are taken by Linda Diaz 790-1290

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Oregon website: www.hearinglossOR.org

Chapter website: www.hearinglosslane.org



Out & About

Andrea Cabral and **Clark Anderson** met with the Springfield Police Department on June 1, 2015, along with an attorney, the Springfield Police Chief, and Chad Ludwig Oregon Association of the Deaf. They were totally interested in our needs and desires. Springfield has the largest jail in the State. They have purchased 2 I-pads for communications and they are talking about getting a Captel phone as long as it is in budget within this next month. Andrea will be helping consult with the Springfield Police Department. Clark & Andrea are excited about the changes being written in the instructions for the jail.

Shirley Perry attended the OAD conference June 5th and 6th.

ADA 25th anniversary celebration July 25th 11 – 2 p.m. at Hilyard Community Center.

There will be a parade, food, dancing wheel chairs and firemen. It will be a free event open to the public.

Leslie Berquist contacted the Newport Aquarium regarding their having no caption videos on their new exhibit Secrets of Shipwrecks: **Part History. Part Mystery.**

Veggies to Grow for Hearing Health

Healthy Hearing

A small garden can yield a variety of fresh, seasonable vegetables. Plants contain fiber, vitamins and minerals along with compounds which play a role in preventing certain kinds of cancers, heart disease and stroke. Certain vegetables can even be beneficial to your hearing health.

Spinach, broccoli and asparagus

These vegetables contain folic acid, which reduces the number of free radicals in your body that can damage the delicate tissue in your inner ear. According to a Dutch study, participants who were given a folic acid supplement had less low-frequency hearing loss than those receiving a placebo.

Artichokes, broccoli and potatoes

Plant these vegetables to get your daily intake of Magnesium. An article in the 2003 issue of the Journal of the American Academy of Audiology states those with a magnesium deficiency are more at risk for developing hearing loss as a result of noise damage, ototoxicity or auditory hyperexcitability.

Bell peppers

If you can sneak a few bell peppers into your kids' – or grandkids' – diet this year and they may have a reduced incidence of ear infections. That's because bell peppers have Vitamin E, another defense against free radicals, which helps strengthen your immune system.

Dark, leafy greens like spinach and arugula

These are rich in folic acid which reduces the number of free radicals in your body that damage the tissue in your inner ear.

Keeping Your Batteries Charged



Information You Can Use

People with HIV tend to have worse hearing than people without the virus. Researchers at San Diego State University have found a higher frequency of hearing loss among adults who are infected with HIV than among non-HIV adults. Those with HIV tended to have worse hearing at lower and higher frequencies. This was the case even after the researchers took other factors into account including long term exposure to HIV-suppressing antiviral drugs and the actual HIV "viral load". The study could not prove cause and effect.

Even minor hearing loss can be problematic in school. This is why it is important to be alert to indications of hearing loss in the pupils. Hearing impaired children experience difficulties in an ordinary classroom. Hearing impaired children experience problems when attending mainstream schools unless they receive proper help and support. They may not become properly integrated, and they tend to keep in the background as they try to avoid standing out from their classmates.

Many children fail to communicate that they cannot hear what the teacher or the other pupils are saying. They may never ask the other pupils to repeat themselves, and some even tell the teacher that no special microphone is required even though sound amplification would make it easier for them to hear properly.

The hearing impaired children want to be like their friends with normal hearing, and they often feel inadequate when drawing attention to their hearing problem. All this has social consequences for the children. Many of them keep to themselves and prefer not to take part in classroom activities.

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of Hearing Loss
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although the injections are known to be somewhat uncomfortable. Additional treatments may be necessary to treat the underlying cause, i.e. antibiotics for an infection.

Although 50% of those who experience SSHL spontaneously recover all or some of their hearing within one to two weeks, it is vital to seek treatment as soon as possible; indications are that the window for treatment closes two to four weeks after the onset of the hearing loss, meaning the hearing loss will then become permanent and irreversible.

If you experience sudden onset hearing loss, whatever you do don't ignore it in the hopes that it will go away. Seeking treatment from a hearing professional immediately could make all the difference.

Unless you're hearing impaired, most people don't use closed captioning on their TVs at home. But one group is hoping to make subtitles a requirement at public places like gyms and bars across the City of Portland. Walking into the St. Honore Bakery on SE Division Street you'll smell all kinds of pastries, but you may also notice a television with closed captioning turned on.

"Without captioning we're at a loss as to what's going on," David Viers, who is hearing impaired, told KOIN 6 News. KOIN

David attends Portland OR HLA

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Download or Complete Applications at www.rspf.org



Membership in HLAA is \$20 student, \$35 individuals, \$45 for couple/family, \$60 professional. It includes the award-winning bi-monthly magazine, *Hearing Loss*. Write HLAA, 7910 Woodmont Ave., Ste.

1200, Bethesda, MD 20814; 301-657-2248 (Voice); 301-657-224 (TTY); 301-913-9413 (Fax) or www.hearingloss.org. Get the latest e-news: <http://www.hearingloss.org/membership/Sen.asp>.

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**Can't Hear With
Background
Noise?**

Or do you have difficulty understanding words on TV or having a telephone conversation? 30 million Americans have this type of hearing problem. Hearing aids help very little when there is noise present and make it worse in loud noise. They work best in low noise, "living room" situations. Background noise (especially speech) and long distances to the sound source, make you unable to distinguish words.

I know because I struggled with this problem for over 10 years as my hearing got worse until I discovered the existence of Assistive Listening Devices (ALDs). These devices bring the sound source closer while at the same time increasing the high frequencies that make words crisp. This improves your understanding dramatically in noisy backgrounds. Personal amplifiers, like the **Audable Personal Listener (\$79.99 – w/ headphones & earphones)**, are used in restaurants, automobiles, and small groups to enable you to UNDERSTAND what is being said. **45-day price refund.**

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Springfield Times & and Creswell Chronicles have partnered to release a Senior Living and Resource Guide called **Senior Living**.

It contains an article by Leone Miller about our Survivors Manual and dealing with hearing loss. The publication is the Spring-Summer 015 issue.

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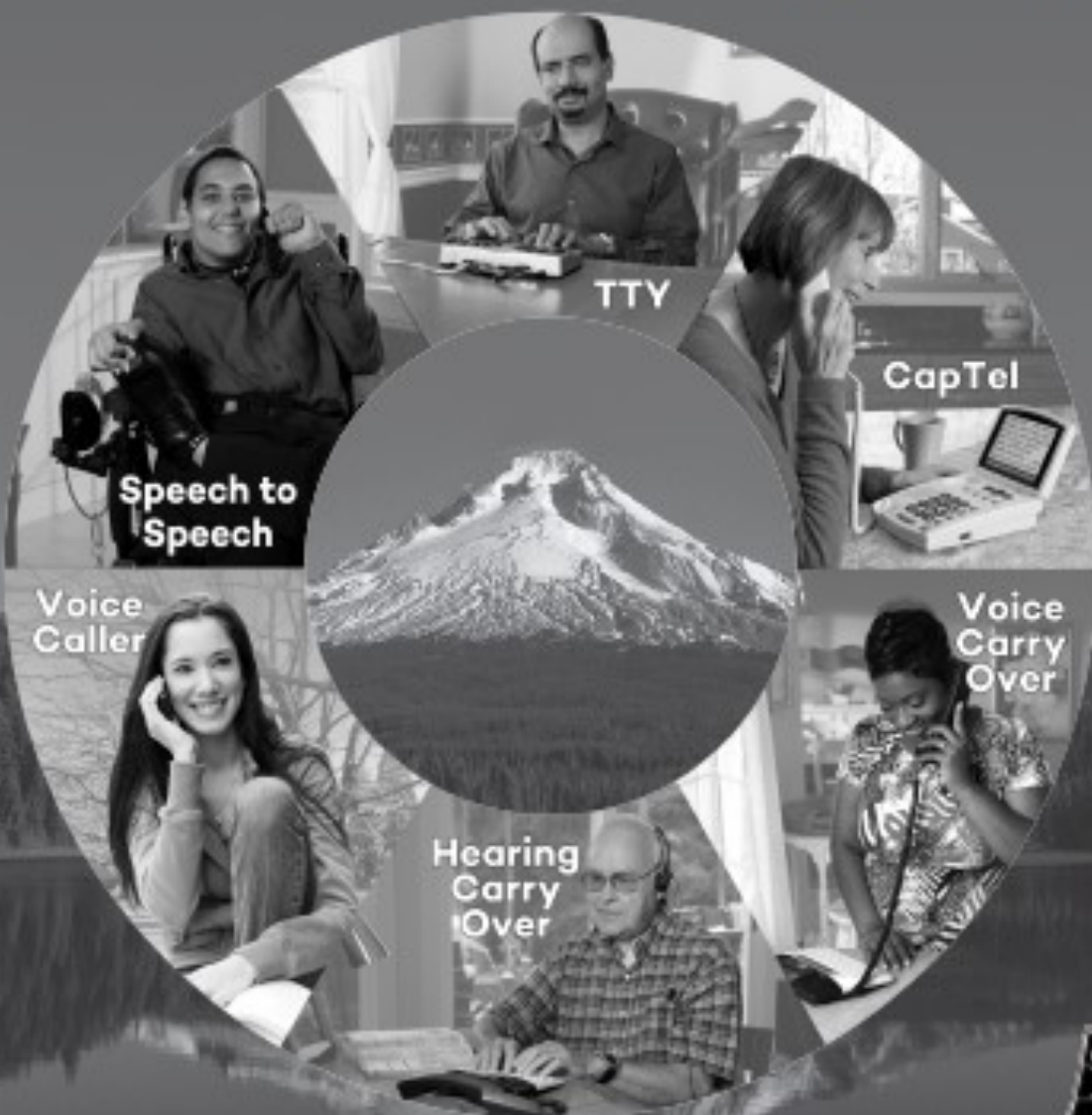
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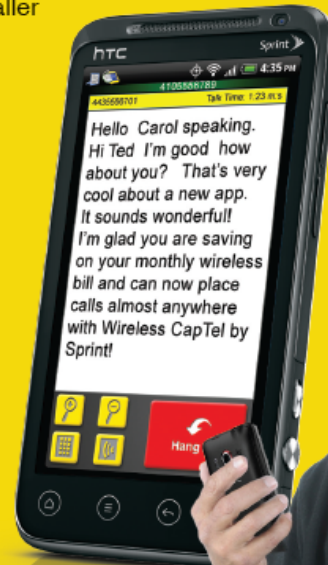


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* App requires an Android-powered device with OS 2.2 or higher.

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Hearing Loss Assoc. of Lane County Chapter Fee and National Membership Form

Please fill out this form /survey and turn in at the general meeting or mail to HLA - Lane Co., PO Box 22501, Eugene, OR 97402.

I have enclosed: Chapter fees _____ \$10.00 Chapter Donation of \$ _____
National dues _____ \$35.00 (regular) \$70 _____ (professional)*

Name: _____ E-mail: _____

Preferred phone: _____

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What most interests/puzzles you about hearing or hearing devices?

Are you interested in volunteering? What would you like to do?

How did you learn about us _____?

Would you like to be on our email news list: _____ Yes _____ No

*Donations to either the national organization or our local chapter are always welcome and are tax deductible. (We do not share our information lists with anyone else. Receipts will gladly be provided.)

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If the month & year on your mailing label have already passed, it's time to renew your membership! Please use the form on page 6 to pay your dues

Thursday JULY 9TH
Hilyard Center in Eugene OR

POTLUCK SOCIAL: 6:30 – 8 p.m.

Baked Potato Bar, Salad's & Desserts
HLA will provide a baked potato bar with toppings.

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accessible for all degrees of hearing loss - Amplification, Loop Assistive listening system and Real Time Captioning provided. For more information, contact lesleyb@earthlink.net.

Calendar

Board June 30
3:30 to 5 pm Members Welcome
Hilyard Community Ctr.
2580 Hilyard St Eugene

Membership meetings are the 2nd Thursday of the month. They are accessible for all degrees of hearing loss by amplification—loop assistive listening systems.
Real time captioning by CC Reporting
(Debby, Chris, ad Jan)