

HEAR HEAR!



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The
HEARING &
BALANCE
Lab, PC

FEATURE ARTICLE: HEAR FOR LIFE

Written By: A. Nichole Kingham, Au.D.

So, you have new hearing aids. What now? Many of my patients are surprised to find out that once they have made the commitment to step off the proverbial cliff and begin the journey toward better hearing, the journey truly has just begun. The fact of the matter is, hearing better does not just magically happen when you get your new instruments. Instead, it takes some work to improve how you will hear in the most difficult of situations. And, even with hearing aids, you may find that you still struggle in some of the more extreme situations like a cocktail party or in a large gathering of friends or family. I wish it were like putting on a pair of glasses...you can't hear one minute, put the hearing aids in and "tada!" But that's just not the case. So, why doesn't it work that way? With all the technological advancements, you'd think that it *should* work that way. The reason lies in the inner ear and beyond.

The anatomy of the ear is intricate, elaborate and complicated. Hearing loss can occur at any one of several areas of the system or in multiple areas at the same time. And, with the passage of time, hearing loss along with the aging process can change how the brain uses the information it does get. Let me tell you a story that might make this process more clear:

My mother crochets the most beautiful blankets. The designs are detailed and intricate. The stitches are small and delicate. Each stitch has its place. My mom made a blanket for my son when he was just a baby. It is a beautiful blue and white blanket in a square pattern.

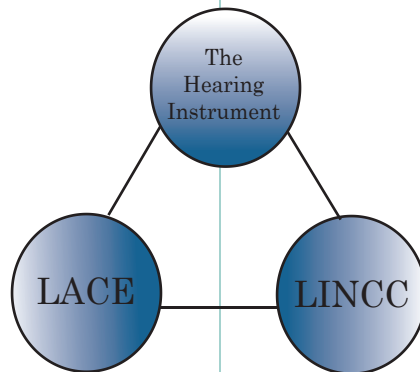
My son sleeps with that blanket every night. It is well loved. Recently, he noticed that some of the yarn had begun to unravel in the center of the blanket and a hole had appeared. He asked my mom to fix it for him. Being the fantastic artisan she is, she was able, with time and a bit of effort, to piece the ends back together. When she gave it back to Ethan, he was immediately able to find the spot where the hole once was. The yarn, once broken will never be like the original. True, the hole is not there, but to Ethan (and my mother as well) that spot sticks out like a sore thumb. To me, the blanket appears brand new! To my son, it has been forever altered.

Your ear, once hearing loss has occurred is forever altered as well. The intricate hearing system, once damaged, can never work like it once did. So, simply putting a hearing aid in the ear is not the answer to the problem.

Hearing aids are an important part of the solution, but many people who simply get hearing aids and do nothing else are dissatisfied with the benefit they receive from their hearing aids.

So what can you do?

Most of the benefit our patients receive from our Program at The Hearing & Balance Lab occurs *After* they receive hearing aids. Auditory Therapy, a kind of "physical therapy" for the ears is an integral part of the overall process. Our Program is three-tiered. The first



WHAT ARE OUR PATIENTS SAYING?

HEARING & BALANCE TO

I am an eighty year-old lady and I had a big problem. It was hard for me to have a conversation because everyone around me was talking too softly or mumbling. Finally, my children convinced me that the problem was me. I just could not hear unless people spoke very loudly.

At my next appointment with my primary doctor, I asked for his recommendation of who I should see. He said that The Hearing & Balance Lab and their doctors are the best. I did not know what to expect for my first appointment. Everyone was so nice and made me feel comfortable and at ease. Dr. Nichole explained everything very patiently and encouraged me to ask questions.

It surprised me that ears also need physical therapy. And that is where the LACE training disc came in. I enjoy working with it and seeing my hearing improvement. Thanks to Dr. Nichole and LACE, I now enjoy talking to my family and friends, even when I am in a crowd of people. I have had my hearing aids now for four months and I forget I have them in. My only regret is that I did not see Dr. Nichole sooner. My son, who came with me a few times was so impressed that he made an appointment with The Hearing & Balance Lab to get his hearing tested.

Thank you Dr. Nichole and the staff for all the encouragement. And let's not forget the free lifetime batteries.

Sincerely,

Lya A. Colman



FEATURE ARTICLE: CON'T

tier is the actual fitting process itself. We use a scientific approach that is meant to slowly acclimate the hearing aid user to the speech sounds that have been missing due to hearing loss. The second tier is Listening and Communication Enhancement (LACE) training that is done at home via computer or on DVD. We'll even loan you a DVD player if you don't happen to have one. This training is geared toward teaching you to listen more effectively and more confidently. It also tries to rebuild the "broken strands" that occur in the inner ear and beyond after disuse. The third tier is Auditory Training, a 4-part training program that our patients attend in a group setting on a weekly basis for one month. This part of the program, called Learning to Integrate New Communication Concepts (LINCC) training is meant to empower you to use your hearing and hearing aids more effectively and to help you and your communication partners develop new skills for adapting to the hearing loss in your personal listening environments. The four parts of LINCC include:

- Anatomy of the ear and anatomy of the hearing test
- Understanding your hearing loss and the communication difficulties it creates
- Communication Strategies
- Listening Strategies and Use of Assistive Devices

With this three-tiered approach, coupled with the hearing instrument fitting, our goal is that you will not only receive excellent hearing instrumentation, but that you will ultimately have a better understanding of why you have the difficulties you do because of the hearing loss. And, with the tools we provide, you will be able to compensate for the hearing loss in the majority of the listening situations you encounter each day.

If you'd like more information on our LACE or LINCC programs, please give us a call or email me at drkingham@thehearingandbalancelab.com. I hope to see you in our next class where you can *Discover The Missing LINCC!*

& BALANCE ODAY



Top: Anita Miller, Dr. Michael Mallahan, Dr. Nichole Kingham, Dr. Lori Caldwell, Angel Miller. Bottom: Jane James, Amber Bong, Ryan Bahl

THE DIRECTOR'S CUT: GUATEMALA: A CONTINUED SUCCESS



Our February trip was a great success. Thank you to everyone that contributed financially to the children's care. In addition, thanks to so many of you that brought coloring books, markers, and beanie babies for the children.

We traveled to 5 different towns and saw an amazing 308 children. 92 of these children were fit with hearing aids, 35 were pre-screened and scheduled for surgery when we return in November.

I'd like to give a huge thank you to The Phonak Corporation who donated 30 hearing aids and batteries to Healing The Children. A short video that describes the reasons we are serving the underprivileged in Guatemala can be found on our website under the Medical Mission Work tab. Please take a moment to view the video to see how your generosity is making an impact.

Michael Mallahan, Au.D.



Saturday, May 30th from 10am-1pm we will be providing a hearing screening to people of all ages. We encourage you to share this opportunity with your family and friends and join us!

Also, for those interested in learning more about how your balance system works, Dr. Michael Mallahan will be leading an interactive lecture at 1pm.

Please call 425-316-5102 to schedule your appointment for the hearing screening and reserve a seat for the balance lecture!

NEWS AND UPDATES

Recent Trainings

The last several weeks have provided wonderful educational opportunities for our clinic staff. In March, Ryan and Angel traveled to Coeur d'Alene, Idaho to attend the Tri-State Hearing Convention. Drs. Mallahan, Kingham, and Caldwell went to Dallas, Texas in early April for the American Academy of Audiology National meeting. Both conferences offered excellent courses presenting current research and technology.

Rate the Restaurant-Update

We have been gathering valuable information and opinions from our patients about listening with hearing instruments in local restaurants. Dr. Mallahan will publish these results in our next newsletter because of the overwhelming response we are still receiving! If you have a great spot that you would like to share with others or even somewhere that you don't recommend, we would still like to hear about it! Please call our clinic at 425-316-5102 or email mallahan@verizon.net

MEET OUR STAFF: A. NICHOLE KINGHAM, Au.D.

NEXT ISSUE

Our next featured staff member will be our Billing Specialist, Amber Bong.

DROP-INS

If you need a quick check of your hearing instrument and can't wait for an appointment, stop in to see Ryan for a quick fix!

Contact us at (425)316-5102

Or send us an email

www.hearingandbalancelab.com



My name is Dr. Nichole Kingham and I love being an Audiologist. I knew from a very young age what I was meant to become. My journey to becoming an Audiologist began when my mother, who has hearing loss, got her first hearing aid. I remember that day very distinctly. I was 8 years old. A man came to our house, gave a primitive sort of hearing test, told her she needed a hearing aid, then filled her ear with pink goo. He came back two weeks later with the instrument. It was big and ugly, in my estimation. "Why would anyone want to stick a piece of gum in their ear?" I thought. Even at that young age, I felt like there was something wrong with how the man went about the whole thing. Why didn't he explain anything? Why did my mom have hearing loss? Was it going to happen to me? And then, she still couldn't hear. I was upset. I wanted my mom to hear! I wanted to protect

her! So, I determined then and there that I would be the one to help her to hear. I'm proud to say that I'm my mom's Audiologist. And she now understands her hearing loss. It is a basic human right to know and understand what is happening in and to your body. It is my passion and my commitment to treat each and of every one of my patients like I'd want my mother treated: with respect and dignity and to give each of you as much information as I can so that you may make an educated decision regarding your hearing healthcare. It has been my pleasure to be of service to you these past 5 years at The Hearing & Balance Lab and I look forward to getting to know you better in the years to come.

Dr. Kingham is a graduate of The University of Washington and A. T. Still University School of Health Sciences. She is Board Certified in Audiology and a Fellow of The American Academy of Audiology.



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