

EAR AND HEARING HEALTH

DEPARTMENT OF AUDIOLOGY

Hearing Aid Assistance Tax Credit Act

Hearing loss continues to be one of the few medical conditions lacking financial assistance for habilitation. Yet numerous studies have documented the impact of untreated hearing loss, not only on the direct communicative difficulties, but also the psychosocial impacts including anxiety, withdrawal, isolation, depression and anger. One recent study (Sergei Kochkin, August 2005, Better Hearing Institute) documented an average loss of income per household of up to \$12,000 annually per household associated with untreated hearing loss. The use of hearing aids was demonstrated to decrease this impact by up to 50% when other factors were controlled. Yet many individuals who would benefit from amplification do not pursue technology due to the personal financial investment required.

In July, Representative Carolyn McCarthy (D—New York) and Vernon Ehlers (R-Michigan) with the support of 21 co-sponsors introduced H.R. 2239, the Hearing Aid Assistance Tax Credit Act, to the House of Representatives. Senator Norm Coleman (R-MN) has also introduced this legislation to the Senate as S.1410. The act proposes a tax credit of \$500 per hearing aid for patients 55 years and older and/or dependents of taxpayers. These benefits would be restricted to one deduction every five years.

Both proposals are in the first step of legislative process and have been referred to the House Ways and Means Committee and the Senate Finance Committee for consideration. Locally, Peter Roskam (6th district) and John Shimkus (19th district) have voiced their support of this act as co-sponsors.

Would you appreciate some financial assistance with your necessary amplification purchases? If so, please consider contacting our local representatives to voice your support of H.R. 2329 and S.1410. Currently two members of the House Ways and Means Committee are from the Chicagoland area — Jerry Weller of the 11th district and Rahm Emmanuel of the 5th district. Midwestern senators currently serving on the Senate Finance Committee are Debbie Stabenow of Michigan and Charles Grassley of Iowa. Contact information can be found by visiting www.hearing.org/public/online.

Online Hearing Loss Simulator

The Better Hearing Institute has recently launched an online hearing loss simulator that can be accessed on their website: www.betterhearing.org/sound. This online tool is a great educational forum not only for those with hearing loss, but also for family members and friends without hearing loss trying to understand the impact of living with hearing difficulties. Three different presentations of 21 different sound files are presented as heard through the “ears” of a normal hearing individual, a patient with a mild hearing loss, and an individual with a moderate high frequency hearing loss. Allow the person with “normal” hearing to set the volume of the computer speakers to a level that sounds comfortable when playing one of the normal sound files. Next, play the mild and moderate loss sound files to allow comparison.

Make sure to listen to the restaurant simulation, perhaps the most commonly expressed area of difficulty. Notice how much effort is required to attend to the conversation. What an eye and ear opener!



Department of Audiology

Linda Berry, M.S., CCC-A
 Mary Theiler, Au.D.
 Kristen Evans Davia, M.A., CCC-A
 Stacy Michels, M.A., CCC-A
 Michael Hojnacki, Au.D.

Battery Sale!

For a limited time, our Audiology Department will be offering special value packs of 48 Rayovac™ Ultra Proline batteries at a discounted rate. Rayovac is known not only as the longest lasting and most reliable hearing aid battery but also for their four year expiration dates. A great gift for a difficult to buy for loved one! Or perhaps, just stock up on quality batteries for your personal supply.

These value packs will be available for \$40 only through the end of the year. Please call to reserve your value pack in the correct size now! For your convenience, you have a choice of receiving your purchase through the mail or picking the packs up at any of our office locations.

Glen Ellyn 630 469 9200 ext 7323

Lombard 630 873 8720

Naperville 630 355 8000 option 1 ext 2237

ONLY \$40
for a 48 Pack of Rayovac™
Ultra Proline Batteries

Batteries: Did You Ever Wonder?

Frequently patients, new and experienced hearing aid wearers alike, will ask questions regarding hearing aid batteries. Answers to a few most common questions follow to satisfy those wondering minds.

How should the batteries be stored?

- Store your batteries in a dry area at room temperature. Extreme heat, such as your car in the summertime, will shorten the life of your batteries. The moisture of the refrigerator causes the tab seal to loosen and the battery will become activated and begin to drain before even using it in your hearing instrument.
- Store batteries either in their original container or in a battery holder, not in your pocket or bottom of your purse. Contact with other metal objects such as keys or coins can cause the batteries to charge or possibly even leak. Dead batteries can be discarded in your regular garbage.

Why the tabs on the batteries?

Hearing aid batteries are typically a zinc battery. This type of battery actually uses the air outside the battery cell as a source of power. Within one minute of removal of this tab, air will reach the zinc within the battery cavity activating the battery for use. Replacing the tab on your battery will not “save” power. Once activated, the battery slowly begins to drain, with or without use in your hearing aid. A typical size 312 battery will be completely drained in approximately 30 days just sitting on your dresser never having been used. Moral of the story: Don't take those tabs off until you are ready for a new battery. And speaking of tabs, many of our patients will use those tabs to mark their calendar the day of their last battery change. This allows patients to easily track average battery life for their particular instruments and wearing schedules, eliminating those unsettling dead battery moments in social situations.

Can weather affect my batteries?

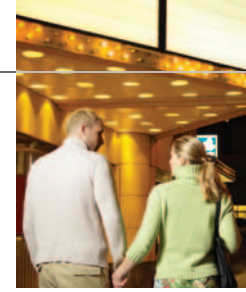
Both humidity and dryness associated with our colder seasons can decrease the overall battery life. Of more significance, however, is perspiration. Due to the sodium content, perspiration can coat the battery occluding the air openings and shorting out the battery. The sodium in perspiration also increases the probability of corrosion development within the hearing aid case, especially inside the battery door. During our hot humid summer months, it's a wise idea to periodically wipe your battery off if oily to the touch to ensure better battery performance.

What is the difference between a size 13 and 13A?

Simply put, nothing. A 13 is a size 13 regardless of any letter prefix or suffix. Same is true for all the battery sizes. Different manufacturers may add letters for their own purposes, unfortunately adding to patient confusion at times.

What batteries do you prefer?

Our offices have chosen to provide Rayovac™ Ultra Proline batteries for several reasons. Rayovac has consistently been a leader in hearing aid battery inventions and applications. Studies have demonstrated not only longer performance but also greater consistency in performance between batteries meaning a more reliable source of power for our patients. The Ultra Proline is a newer premium form of Rayovac battery, currently available only through hearing professionals. Design of this battery has continued to improve through Rayovac's tradition of excellence in battery longevity and consistency. It is the only battery product with a four year shelf life. Other nagging questions about batteries on your mind? Don't hesitate to ask!



Insight Cinema

Insight Cinema is a non-profit outreach program that works with local movie theatres to provide open captioned films to enhance the viewing pleasure of individuals with hearing loss. The open captions are not enclosed in a black box blocking the picture, but rather, the dialogue appears directly on the screen. A variety of films, including current titles, are offered.

A number of theatres from Addison, Bolingbrook, Crestwood, Elgin, New Lenox and Schaumburg have begun offering open captioned films. To check for a local theatre near you and for movies and show times, visit www.insightcinema.org.

Noisy Toys: A Need for Cautious Gift Giving

Every parent has experienced the annoyance of the repetitive, and often loud noise of a child's favorite toy. Unfortunately some toys may create more than an annoyance with intensity levels high enough to potentially create a noise induced hearing loss.

Annually, studies are published measuring the sound output of some of the year's most popular toys. Cap guns typically top the lists with the loudest levels but some of the other toys making the lists are a bit more surprising. Books with sound button panels designed for toddlers, talking dolls, toy phones and musical instruments are often capable of emitting well over 100 decibels. Even a few rattles with squeakers designed for the youngest of our children can pose a hazard. To put these levels into perspective, OSHA regulates industrial noise of 85 dB HL and higher as potentially harmful to employees.

Other factors, such as how a child plays with a toy and/or how long he/she plays with the toy will influence the risk of hearing impairment. The noise of a toy is also typically closer to a child's ear due to the shorter length of his/her arms. Many toys that emit noise are safe as long as they are used sensibly with an adult supervising play and limiting play to reasonable amounts of time. If a toy is too loud for you, then it's likely too loud for your child. Noise levels can be decreased to more reasonable levels by placing masking tape over the sound outlet of a favorite toy. Removing the batteries would be even better!

We talk to our children about personal safety, healthy eating and exercise habits. It's never too early to begin discussing hearing conservation and hearing care with our children. Noisy toys provide a wonderful opportunity to start teaching even our toddlers that loud sounds can be harmful to their ears. Perhaps with early and continued discussions on the importance of our hearing, the foundation will be created for more responsible choices as teenagers and adults.

“Noise levels can be decreased to more reasonable levels by placing masking tape over the sound outlet of a favorite toy.”



Reminder

Though the end of the year comes at the same time every year, it seems as though it sneaks up on us every time. Each year our Audiology offices are inundated with calls from patients wishing to be seen before the end of the year. This time of year often can be our busiest.

If you know that you or a family member are due for an appointment at the end of the year, please call soon to schedule. These appointments are already beginning to fill!

Hello and Goodbye

It is with pleasure that our Audiology Department introduces and welcomes a new addition to our team— Dr. Michael Hojnacki. Dr. Hojnacki recently joined our department in August after completing his doctoral education at Central Michigan University. He brings unique externship experiences and fluency in Spanish to our department. He is just as enthusiastic about quality patient care as the rest of our team and looks forward to meeting you. Dr. Hojnacki will have hours available by appointment at our Glen Ellyn and Naperville locations.

This new position, unfortunately, was created by the departure of Theresa Delacenserie, M.A., CCC-A in May. Those of you who met Ms. Delacenserie can imagine how much she is missed. We wish her the best in her new professional endeavors in her new position that fortunately includes a much shorter commute.



EAR AND HEARING HEALTH

DEPARTMENT OF AUDIOLOGY

Glen Ellyn

454 Pennsylvania Avenue
Glen Ellyn, IL 60137
630 469 9200 *ext* 7323

Naperville

100 Spalding Drive, Ste 300
Naperville, IL 60540
630 355 8000 option 1 *ext* 2237

Lombard

1801 S. Highland Avenue, Ste 220
Lombard, IL 60148
630 873 8720

Our Staff



Linda Berry, M.S., CCC-A : Ms. Berry earned her Master's degree in Audiology in 1990 from Illinois State University. She worked in a variety of settings before joining DuPage Medical Group in 1994. Ms. Berry enjoys the variety that our department offers while working closely with the physicians in the Otolaryngology department to provide excellent hearing healthcare to our patients. Her clinical interests include rehabilitation with our senior population and electrophysiology assessments.



Mary Theiler, Au.D. : Dr. Theiler recently completed her doctorate degree at A.T. Still University in addition to her Master's degree from Northern Illinois University in 1996. She looks forward to incorporating her new knowledge to expand DuPage Medical Group's Audiology services to better serve our patients locally. She joined DuPage Medical Group in 2000 with experience in the areas of pediatrics and industrial assessment. Her clinical interests include pediatric assessment and rehabilitation, digital amplification, as well as our new BAHAs program.



Kristen Evans Davia, M.A., CCC-A : Mrs. Evans Davia earned her Bachelor's Degree in Speech and Hearing Science from The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and her Master's Degree specializing in Audiology from Ohio State University. She is currently pursuing her doctorate in clinical Audiology with anticipated matriculation in March 2008. She joined DuPage Medical Group in 2002 to complete her clinical fellowship year and stayed on as a licensed and certified clinical audiologist. Her clinical interests are vestibular and electrophysiologic assessments.



Stacy Michels, M.A., CCC-A: Ms. Michels earned her Bachelor's degree in Communicative Disorders as well as her Master's degree in Audiology from Northern Illinois University. She joined DuPage Medical Group in August 2005 after completing her clinical fellowship year as an educational audiologist. Ms. Michels enjoys the full range of diagnostic services our department offers and hopes to contribute her knowledge regarding FM systems and CAPD testing. Her clinical interests include electrophysiologic assessments and hearing conservation.



Michael Hojnacki, Au.D.: Dr. Hojnacki, a new member of DuPage Medical Group in August 2007, recently completed his doctorate degree at Central Michigan University. He spent the last year of his externship at a non-profit hearing center in southern California working primarily with pediatric and Spanish speaking patients; Dr. Hojnacki is bilingual in English and Spanish. His clinical interests include vestibular diagnostics, electrophysiologic testing, and early identification and treatment of hearing loss.