



Accent Hearing
EXCELLENCE IN LISTENING



The Listener



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Autumn Edition - 2024

Grafton - Glen Innes - Inverell

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Welcome to the Autumn 2024 edition of Accent Hearing's Newsletter *The Listener*.

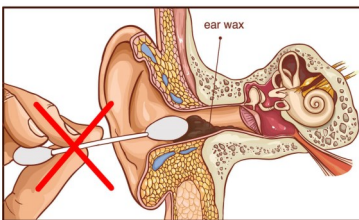


As you may well know, Accent Hearing's Head Office moved to 23 Queen Street Grafton in early January this year. It has been a very successful move, given we are on a corner with great exposure in the Grafton CBD. Please don't forget to enter from the rear of the building up the wheel chair ramp or stairs.

Accent Hearing New Opening Hours

Monday: 9:00am to 4:00pm
Tuesday: 9:00am to 4:00pm
Wednesday: 9:00am to 4:00pm
Thursday: 9:00am to 4:00pm
Friday: 9:00am to 3:00pm
Sat/Sun: Closed

Wax Removal now available 5 days a week!



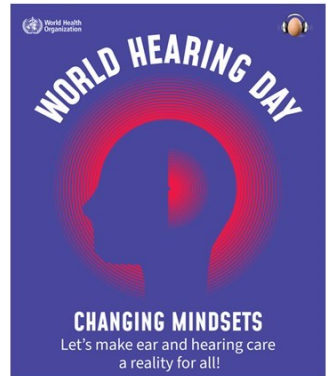
Just call to make an appointment, or drop in and it could be removed on the spot if time permits. Generally you will be required to soften the wax first by spraying a clinical based oil

in the canals 2-3 days before your appointment. This helps with extraction by micro-suction. **Although sold in many pharmacies, please do not use 'cotton buds' or 'ear candles' to clean your ears, as they do not work and can be very dangerous.**

WORLD HEARING DAY

The World Health Organization (WHO) World Hearing Day, will take place on Sunday 3 March 2024. The international event will focus its program on 'Changing mindsets: **Let's make ear and hearing care a reality for all**'. By raising awareness and sharing information, WHO aims to challenge misperceptions and stigmatising mindsets about hearing loss.

"Hearing loss has often been referred to as an 'invisible disability', not just because of the lack of visible symptoms, but because it has long been stigmatised in communities, and ignored by policy-makers", said Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General. Globally, over 80% of ear and hearing care needs remain unmet.



Changing mindsets is crucial for improving access and reducing the cost of unaddressed hearing loss

03 March 2024 #WorldHearingDay

Welcome new staff member Nicole McPhee!



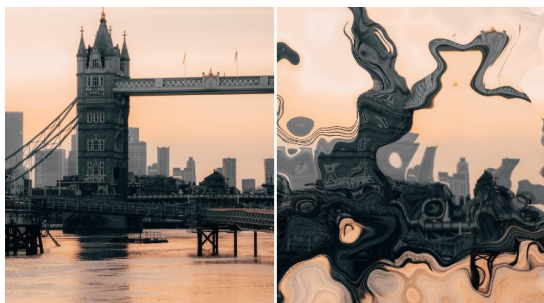
We welcome our new admin staff member Nicole McPhee to the Accent Hearing team as receptionist. Nicole brings a wealth of knowledge with her many years of experience in customer service and is looking forward to meeting you in person or hearing from you soon.

4 Reasons Why Hearing Aids Haven't Worked For You!

Wearing your first set of hearing aids is exciting as well as daunting for most people wanting to do something about their communications skills and enhancing their quality of life with family & friends in their older years. However, disappointment with the outcome may be evident for a few reasons.

1. You have not had the quality time or 'necessary rehabilitation and training' required for a new person wearing hearing aids. All management of devices should be demonstrated by yourself under the supervision of a qualified Audiologist. This not only helps your perseverance through the first few months, but it is most essential for the long time continued use and ease of wearing your devices in the future.

If you have missed appointments to help with your rehabilitation program, it will be like learning to drive a car from reading a book—you don't get the 'real' experience from actually 'doing' what is required to manage and operate your new hearing aids.



2. Your ability to hear with your hearing aids, what is known as 'speech discrimination' could be a little poorer than expected. This means the hearing aids may only give you a certain amount of information (not the full spectrum of sounds) sent higher up the cortex in the brain for you to be able to 'hear clearly' what you are listening to. Because you may have been exposed to excessive noise in your working life time, i.e. jackhammers, farm machinery, rifle fire etc you may have damaged your auditory nerve quite severely.

To compare something like your auditory nerves, say, when you purchased your brand new stereo system 40 years ago, your speaker cables (i.e. auditory nerves) gave you crystal clear sound without any distortion. Now that your stereo system is 40 years old, the speaker cables have had heavy furniture resting on them, or perhaps pets may have chewed on them, only leaving a few strands of wire that now give you a **distorted sound** coming out your speakers. This is the same as your auditory nerves—once they are damaged they can't be repaired. If you have been exposed to very loud noise, the hearing aids may only bring back a certain amount of clear speech recognition, however, having say 80% speech recognition using hearing aids, is better than having below 30% speech recognition at normal speech volumes not wearing hearing aids.

3. 'Background Noise is a problem with everyone, not just the hearing aid wearer'! You need to wear your devices when in background noise! This is most important for your brain to not only hear what you want to hear, but screen out the background noise you don't want to hear also. If you take them out all the time, your brain will never get used to the background noise and the hearing devices will end up in the drawer! If you have been trained well, you will use the volume control, turning down the devices whilst changing into your 'speech in noise program' on the hearing aids. By doing this, it will be much more comfortable to listen to speech whilst in background noise. When you just leave them at the volume set at the fitting and normal program, this may be too loud. This is why you need to know what to do going back to your training and advice from the Audiologist.



4. High expectations! Your hearing is unique and is only relevant to yourself. You cannot go by someone else's hearing aids or experience, as this is only relevant to them. Perseverance is the key to success when starting out on your hearing rehabilitation journey. Bringing a family member to all appointments is highly encouraged, as if someone in the family has hearing loss, it is a 'whole family problem' and not just the person with the hearing loss. If the information above has not been explained, and you are left wondering why a lot of questions have not been answered, this is why you may not have been successful in wearing the devices. This can be rectified with an independent hearing care provider, as they have the time to spend with you in making your hearing aid journey successful.

 World Health Organization

Practice safe listening habits



Keep the volume down



Use earplugs in noisy places



Limit time spent on loud activities



Monitor sound levels using mobile apps

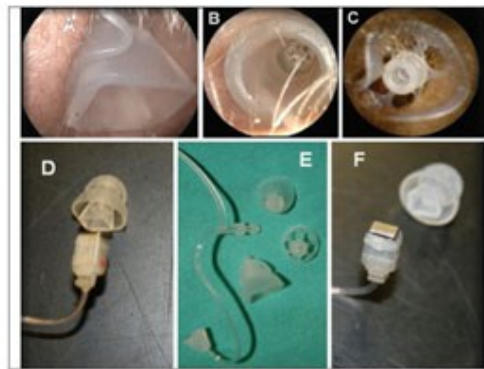


Figure 1: Photo showing (A) dome of a RIC retained in the narrow ear canal; (B) a modified RIC dome retained in the canal; (C) a dome of a behind the ear open fit hearing aid retained in the canal; (D) an example of a RIC hearing aid; (E) an example of an open fit hearing aid tubing with ridges at the end and their different domes; (F) A close-up view of the receiver part of the RIC hearing aid to which the dome attaches to.

Hearing Aid Dome Removal Service

If you happen to pull out your hearing aid and find the little plastic dome is not on the end of the small tubing or wire receiver, it could be stuck in your ear canal! Firstly, there is no need to panic, as we can fit you in for an emergency appointment. Secondly, the only consequences are your hearing will sound duller in that ear, or you will have feedback (whistling) from the hearing aid until you have it removed.

We have heard several stories of clients going to outpatients for dome removal, only to hear about their very stressful time, with pain and bleeding from the ear canal and having to travel to other hospitals much further away. Accent Hearing has the appropriate equipment and a qualified Doctor of Audiology to make a safe recovery of a dome from your ear canal. Also, please don't put another dome on the hearing aid and think you've just lost it, wondering where it might have gone. We have removed up to 3 domes from one ear by someone ignoring where the misplaced dome went! Please drop in for a quick inspection to confirm.

Did you know you can now obtain hearing aids that are rechargeable and your phone calls will stream directly to an iPhone, listening through the hearing aids? Both the later models of Android & iPhones can also operate your hearing aids via an app which is a free download. This makes managing your hearing aids much more easy, as no one will be able to tell you are adjusting your devices via the app, and just think you are doing something on your mobile.

Hearing Aid Technology Update

Did you know you can now obtain hearing aids that are rechargeable and your phone calls will stream directly to an iPhone, listening through the hearing aids? Both the later models of Android & iPhones can also operate your hearing aids via an app which is a free download. This makes managing your hearing aids much more easy, as no one will be able to tell you are adjusting your devices via the app, and just think you are doing something on your mobile.



How's your 'Balance' these days



Hearing loss is associated with:

- *Many communication difficulties, making it challenging to maintain relationships with others.*
- *Other health problems, including tinnitus (ringing in the ears), heart problems, cognitive decline and poor mental health.*
- *Concerns for personal safety and the safety of others.*

The risk of falls is a major problem among the elderly (Iwasaki & Yamasoba, 2014; WHO, 2021), and results confirm that hearing health is an essential component to consider in regard to this problem. Hearing amplification is already encouraged to improve communication in age related hearing loss, and suggest that hearing aid amplification could also be recommended to reduce the risk of falls.

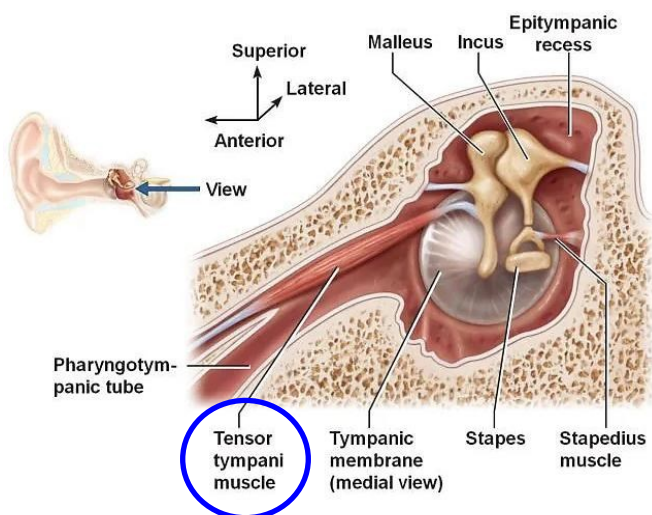
Agrawal Y., Van de Berg R., Wuyts F., Walther L., Magnusson M., Oh E., Sharpe M., Strupp M. (2019). Presbyvestibulopathy: Diagnostic criteria consensus document of the classification committee of the Bárány Society. *Journal of Vestibular Research: Equilibrium & Orientation*, 29, 161–170. <https://doi.org/10.3233/VES-190672>

A Rooster's crow is deafening if you stand too close. So how do they protect their own hearing? Did you know that when a rooster's beak is fully open, as it is when crowing, a quarter of the ear canal completely closes, and soft tissue covers 50% of the eardrum. This means roosters are not capable of hearing their own crows at full strength.



But, did you know humans have similar?

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The tensor tympani muscle is a small muscle located in the middle ear, specifically in the bony canal called the tympanic cavity. Its primary function is to dampen or reduce the intensity of sounds that enter the ear. When exposed to loud noises or sounds, the tensor tympani muscle contracts reflexively. This contraction alters the tension on the eardrum (tympanic membrane) and makes it less sensitive to loud sounds. Essentially, it's like turning down the volume in your ears to protect your hearing from sudden, potentially damaging sounds. This muscle plays a role in a process known as the "acoustic reflex," which is a natural protective mechanism to prevent excessively loud sounds from causing harm to your delicate inner ear structures, including the cochlea and hair cells responsible for hearing. The tensor tympani muscle, along with another muscle called the stapedius muscle, contributes to this reflexive response.

Bluetooth Phone Connection Issues

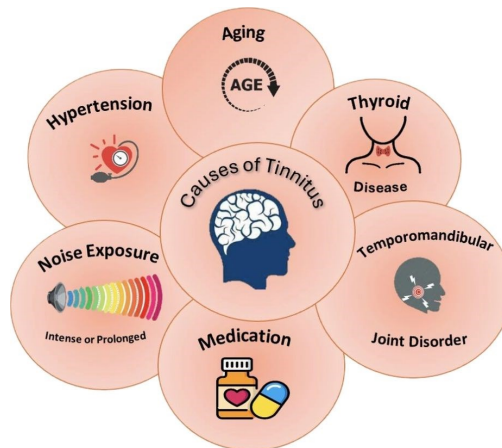
Please note: After your official follow-up from a hearing aid fitting, there will now be a charge for any Bluetooth reconnections or problems you may have. Staff are here to help you correct any mistakes with your mobile phone, however this has become very time consuming and a small payment is now required. Please take note at the fitting of what procedures are required to connect your hearing aids to your mobile phone app.

Could drinking coffee help with age related hearing loss (ARHL)?

Several studies have found that caffeine has anti-inflammatory properties which can benefit our health in many ways. However, in a study, caffeine was administered in drinking water to mice from the age of 3 months to 12 months, which ameliorated ARHL. ARHL is a complex degenerative disease for which there is currently no ideal method of treatment or prevention. However, caffeine, one of the most widely used drugs worldwide and a major component of common drinks, has been shown in numerous studies to have potential protective effects against age-related chronic diseases, such as those studied by Grosso et al., Kaster et al., Londzin et al., and Stazi et al. In a recent study, it was observed that hearing thresholds in mice progressively increased with age at all frequencies, displaying typical ARHL characteristics. However, compared with control groups, the caffeine-treated mice exhibited less hearing loss. However, the optimal dose and treatment time of caffeine, as well as the mechanisms by which caffeine regulates the inflammation pathway, require further research.



Zhang, Xiaolin*; Cao, Ruijuan*; Li, Changye*; Zhao, Hongchun*; Zhang, Ruyi*; Che, Juan*; Xie, Jinwen†; Tang, Na†; Wang, Yanfei†; Liu, Xiuzhen†; Zheng, Qingyin. Caffeine Ameliorates Age-Related Hearing Loss by Downregulating the Inflammatory Pathway in Mice. *Otology & Neurotology* (J):10.1097/MAO.0000000000004098, February 5, 2024. | DOI: 10.1097/MAO.0000000000004098



Accent Hearing Clinics - 1300 859 828

- **GRAFTON** | 23 Queen Street, Grafton
- **GLEN INNES** | Glen Innes Chiropractic Centre, 113 Meade Street, Glen Innes NSW.
- **INVERELL** | Inverell Hospital Community Health, 41 Swanbrook Road, Inverell NSW.

Accent Hearing is independent and is locally owned. Our clinician Dr Greg Butcher is a University trained Doctor of Audiology; a fully Accredited Member of Audiology Australia; Vice President of Independent Audiologists Australia; and a qualified Medicare Hearing Services Provider.