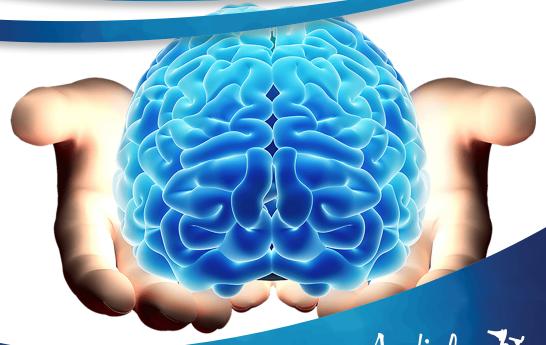
YOUR BRAIN AUSER'S MANUAL



Audiology Associates, Inc.

Ear, Tinnitus, Brain & Balance Centers of Alaska

A Healthy Brain Means a Healthy You!

You already know that your brain is your greatest asset – it helps you get through every day, make good decisions, and keeps you healthy.

However, having a healthy brain as you age is not something to be taken for granted, nor is it a guarantee. Aging is inevitable, decline is optional.

Taking good care of your brain helps you remain an active part of your life, your family, your friends, your community and assures you the life you always wanted as you 'grew up'. It also helps you avoid what you never wanted to deal with (and would never wish upon anybody): cognitive decline and dementia. Long-term research has also discovered that there are links between maintaining the health of your brain and the prevention of chronic conditions such as hearing loss, diabetes, and cardiovascular diseases.

A regularly scheduled hearing exam is critically important to getting an assessment of your cognitive health and in early detection of developing problems. **THE** most important key to preventing cognitive decline and dementia is having good hearing healthcare and following a few simple steps to self-care.

This booklet provides you with tips you need to know in order to keep your brain and ears in good shape, remedies for tinnitus, information about how to maintain proper balance and avoid falling, how to overcome your fear of going to the hearing specialist and much more. We hope that you will find this useful in making sure that your brain stays sharp and healthy.... for life!

Sincerely,





Dr. Keith Darrow, PhD, CCC-A
M.I.T. and Harvard Medical Trained
Neuroscientist and Clinical Audiologist



Harvard-MIT
Health Sciences & Technology

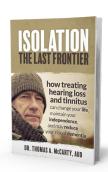








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What Does Your **Hearing Reveal About You?**

A thorough examination of your hearing can reveal many things about you, including potential issues in other parts of your body. For example, a portion of our examination is devoted to risk assessment of dementia, falls, and other medical conditions. In fact, we are the only practice with **Certified Dementia Prevention** Educators that provide each patient an F.D.A approved dementia screening.

In the past decade, we have come to learn the intimate connections of hearing and cognitive function, and how decreases in hearing (which affects nearly ALL OF US as we age!) can dramatically increase the risk of other chronic medical conditions, hospitalizations, and even premature death. Ouch.

A thorough evaluation consists of comprehensively evaluating your stage of hearing loss (i.e., Stage 1 through Stage 4), understanding why you have this hearing loss, determining how beneficial treatment will be for you (i.e., what is your prognosis?) and what treatment plan is right for you.

While most hearing aid stores focus on selling traditional hearing aids that provide limited benefit, our office focuses on the medical treatment of hearing loss and tinnitus and takes a wholistic approach to providing custom treatment plans. After all... your hearing loss does not only affect you (and if you don't believe me ask one of your family members!)



Is Tinnitus Really That Big of A Deal?



The short answer is a resounding YES! To be blunt – there is nothing normal about having tinnitus. Nothing. Tinnitus (said as either tih-NITE-us or TIN-ih-tus) is your internal alarm telling you that something is wrong. Most often, people will describe the experience of hearing a sound in their ears and/or in their head.

Tinnitus is one of, if not the, initial sign of hearing loss for most. In this case, tinnitus is the result of a breakdown of neural connections in the brain, which is caused by hearing loss. Nearly 80-90% of people with hearing loss have some form of tinnitus, i.e., ringing, buzzing, swooshing, beating, etc. It often begins as a 'far-off sound' experienced only in quiet, but as the disorder progresses it can be heard all day, and it can interfere with daily life. In some people, the sound can cause sleep disorders, headaches, depression, anxiety, and affect daily life.

Perhaps it is ironic, but the sound of tinnitus is often experienced before many people notice the loss of sounds due to their hearing loss. Many patients report 'hearing simply fine, except for this annoying ringing in my ears'.

Unfortunately, patients with hearing loss do not suffer in silence, they suffer with the sounds of tinnitus.

Ignoring tinnitus may cause your hearing loss to get worse, which in turn increases your risk of cognitive decline, dementia, falls, social isolation, etc. That is why the small time and financial investment it takes to start your treatment plan pays off in a major way.



Avoiding Falls



Falls are the #1 cause of injury-related deaths and hospital admissions in older adults. While falling can result from a variety of reasons — diabetic neuropathy, orthostatic hypotension (the dizzy feeling you get when you stand too quickly!), decline in physical fitness, impaired vision, medications, accidents, etc., - hearing loss is a major contributor to a person's risk of falling.

A fall can threaten one's safety and independence and generate enormous economic and personal expenses. It is estimated that a fall can cost a family, on average, nearly \$30,000 per incident. And, unfortunately, those who fall nearly double their risk of falling again. Perhaps one of the saddest realities of falls is that most adults who fall are later forced to leave their home.

Occam's razor teaches us that the simplest answer is more often the simplest explanation, and the most common explanation for falls is related to hearing loss. We take for granted the ability to hear our footsteps, creaking floors, the change surface below our feet. In the largest clinical study to date on hearing loss and falls, it was found that hearing loss can increase the risk of falling by 200-300%!

Fortunately, the medical treatment of hearing loss is designed to provide the clarity, auditory awareness and cognitive stimulation required to reduce the risk of falls. New treatment options are simple, affordable and provide significant benefits to physical and cognitive health. Treatment technology options exist that can even detect a fall and alert loved ones.



DID YOU KNOW...

that hearing loss is a progressive degenerative disorder? Conservative estimates indicate that 50 million people in the United States suffer with hearing loss. The good news is that proper medical treatment is available, affordable, and may slow the progression of the disorder. It is recommended that you have your first hearing evaluation at the age of 50 years young and annual testing thereafter.

What You Hear Matters!

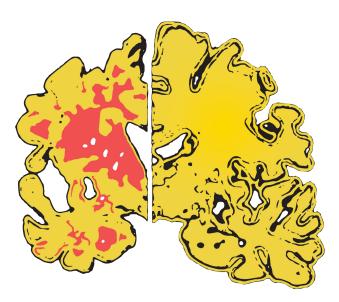


Your brain is always on. Your ears are always on too. This means your brain is constantly stimulated by the vast neural network from your ears. Until it is not. Then what happens?

There is a general belief that activities which stimulate the mind, i.e., hearing, may help to slow cognitive decline. What starts out as subtle cognitive changes that are seemingly associated with aging, go on to affect an older adults' day-to-day function. As we age, there are certain expected cognitive declines that we will all experience. However, with increased risk of cognitive decline and dementia that may be the result of hearing loss, it is important to know the differences of 'normal aging', MCI (mild cognitive impairment) and dementia.

Early stages of significant cognitive decline (first seen in MCI) include problems with memory, language, thinking, judgment and visual perception. Fortunately, most people are still 'with it' enough to notice these issues and can seek early intervention. Family and close friends may also notice a change. But these changes often aren't severe enough to significantly interfere with daily life.

MCI along with hearing loss can increase your risk of later developing dementia caused by Alzheimer's or other neurological conditions. But some people with mild cognitive impairment never get worse, and a few eventually get better. Which is why addressing risk factors early, such as the medical treatment of hearing loss, is critical to preventing dementia.



Brain With Hearing Loss

Brain With Normal Hearing

And What You Eat Matters!



Like an expensive car, your brain functions best when it gets only premium fuel. Eating high-quality foods that contain lots of vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants nourishes the brain and protects it from oxidative stress — the "waste" (free radicals) produced when the body uses oxygen -- which can damage cells.

Unfortunately, just like an expensive car, your brain can be damaged if you ingest anything other than premium fuel. If substances from "low-premium" fuel (such as what you get from processed or refined foods) get to the brain, it has little ability to get rid of them. Diets high in refined sugars, for example, are harmful to the brain. In addition to worsening your body's regulation of insulin, they also promote inflammation and oxidative stress. Multiple studies have found a correlation between a diet high in refined sugars and impaired brain function.

Just as there is no magic pill to prevent cognitive decline, no single almighty brain food can ensure a sharp brain as you age. Nutritionists emphasize that the most important strategy is to follow a healthy dietary pattern that includes a lot of fruits, vegetables, legumes, and whole grains. Try to get protein from plant sources and fish and choose healthy fats, such as olive oil or canola, rather than saturated fats.

That said, certain foods in this overall scheme are particularly rich in healthful components like omega-3 fatty acids, B vitamins, and antioxidants, which are known to support brain health and often referred to as brain foods. Incorporating many of these foods into a healthy diet on a regular basis can improve the health of your brain, which could translate into better mental function.

Research shows that the best brain foods are the same ones that protect your heart and blood vessels, including the following:

- Green, leafy vegetables. Leafy greens such as kale, spinach, collards, and broccoli are rich in brainhealthy nutrients like vitamin K, lutein, folate, and beta carotene. Research suggests these plantbased foods may help slow cognitive decline.
- Fatty fish. Fatty fish are abundant sources of omega-3 fatty acids, healthy unsaturated fats that have been linked to lower blood levels of beta-amyloid—the protein that forms damaging clumps in the brains of people with Alzheimer's disease. Try to eat fish at least twice a week, but choose varieties that are low in mercury, such as salmon, cod, canned light tuna, and pollack, If you're not a fan of fish, ask your doctor about taking an omega-3 supplement, or choose terrestrial omega-3 sources such as flaxseeds, avocados, and walnuts.
- Berries. Flavonoids, the natural plant pigments that give berries their brilliant hues, also help improve memory, research shows. In a 2012 study published in Annals of Neurology, researchers at Harvard's Brigham and Women's Hospital found that women who consumed two or more servings of strawberries and blueberries each week delayed memory decline by up to two-and-a-half years.
- Tea and coffee. The caffeine in your morning cup of coffee or tea might offer more than just a short-term concentration boost. In a 2014 study published in The Journal of Nutrition, participants with higher caffeine consumption scored better on tests of mental function. Caffeine might also help solidify new memories, according to other research. Investigators at Johns Hopkins University asked participants to study a series of images and then take either a placebo or a 200-milligram

caffeine tablet. More members of the caffeine group were able to correctly identify the images on the following day.

 Walnuts. Nuts are excellent sources of protein and healthy fats, and one type of nut in particular might also improve memory. A 2015 study from UCLA linked higher walnut consumption to improved cognitive test scores. Walnuts are high in a type of omega-3 fatty acid called alpha-linolenic acid (ALA), which helps lower blood pressure and protects arteries. That's good for both the heart and brain.

In considering that poor diet is now the leading killer globally and mental disorders account for the largest burden of global disability, the fact that diet appears to play a role in mental as well as physical health (as well as dementia) must be taken very seriously.

GREEN VEGGIES



 Leafy greens such as kale, spinach, collards, and broccoli are rich in brainhealthy nutrients like vitamin K, lutein, folate, and beta carotene. Research suggests these plant-based foods may help slow cognitive decline.

FATTY FISH



2. Fatty fish are abundant sources of omega-3 fatty acids, healthy unsaturated fats that have been linked to lower blood levels of beta-amyloid - the protein that forms damaging clumps in the brains of people with Alzheimer's disease.

BERRIES



3. Flavonoids, the natural plant pigments that give berries their brilliant hues, also help improve memory, research shows.

TEA + COFFEE



4. Coffee and tea might offer more than just a short-term concentration boost. In a recent study, participants with higher caffeine consumption scored better on tests of mental function.

WALNUTS



Nuts are excellent sources of protein and healthy fats, and walnuts in particular might also improve memory, according to a study. Created by:

www.health.harvard.edu





Scared of the Hearing Care Specialist? Here's What You Can Do About It...



Being afraid of seeing a hearing healthcare specialist is quite common. And often time for good reasons – but it really does not have to be something you fear. When fear stops you from taking the best care of yourself, it can lead to even worse problems which can be far more expensive!

The first step is always recognizing your fears. Some of the most common fears voiced by adults living with hearing loss and tinnitus include:

Reasons People Avoid Seeing the Hearing Care Specialist

1. Patients are embarrassed and see it as a sign of aging.

Feelings of shame, inadequacy, being forgotten about, frustration, forgetfulness, loneliness and insecurity are common in older adults with hearing loss. Often times people will deny themselves medical treatment for fear of being viewed as 'old' by family and friends. Trust me when I say this not treating your hearing loss, not being part of the conversation, always saying 'what?' and 'huh?' when others speak – that makes you look old!

2. Patients are afraid it is going to cost too much.

While many things have changed in the past decade when it comes to the medical treatment of hearing loss, perhaps no bigger change is the increase in access and affordability! New treatment options for addressing hearing, tinnitus and associated cognitive needs are simple and affordable for all. For example, a new program in hearing healthcare is the Advantage Leasing Program which offers patients subscription services. Fortunately, gone are the days of having to pay large out-of-pocket costs.

3. Patients are afraid it is going to take too long / miss too much work.

Time is of the essence, no matter your age. Modern technology used in most hearing healthcare offices allows for efficient and effective use of the patient's time.

4. Patients do not see the need to act.

Untreated and under-treated hearing loss (i.e., people who use traditional hearing aids or overthe-counter hearing aids) can significantly decrease their quality of life and increase their risk of dementia, falls, isolation, and premature death. If you have early signs of hearing loss and tinnitus you need to act. NOW!

5. Patients have been treated in the past and it did not work.

Let's face it, not all hearing healthcare specialists are created equal. Every profession has its 'bad apples' and to say that audiology is an exception would be to write a tail of fiction. There is NO ROOM to be indifferent when it comes to choosing the right hearing healthcare specialist. It is critical to find the right specialist who offers not only state of the art treatment technology for you, but also state of the art service as well! The right provider offers every opportunity for patients to feel comfortable, safe and that they made the right decision.

So, now that we have acknowledged people's fears, what can you do about it?

- 1. Recognize your fear. One of the most effective techniques in combating a problem in life is recognizing that you, in fact, have one. Overcoming fear of treating your hearing loss and/or tinnitus is no different. Talk about your fears with a friend or family member or write them down so you can better understand them. Understanding them is key to overcoming them.
- 2. Find a hearing care specialist you are comfortable with. Audiologists and Hearing Specialists are quite used to being "feared", and most will do their best to make you feel comfortable and assure you. Do your research before booking an appointment and focus on finding a provider who specializes in the medical treatment of hearing loss. Be sure to ask friends and family members, and use google to read reviews.
- 3. Determine gradual ways to reduce your fears. The right specialist will never force you into treatment that you are not comfortable with and will understand that creating a great experience is paramount to getting you to trust them. As you work with your hearing care provider, see if you can start slowly, and work your way up as needed and when you are ready.
- 4. Bring someone with you to appointments. Having someone with

Having someone with you when you visit the hearing healthcare provider is mission critical! Not only does this provide an extra layer of security, but it can also help your family and friends understand your struggles, diagnosis and treatment plan. The more ears to listen, the better!





The Truth About Medical Treatment of Hearing **Loss & Tinnitus**

Like ice cream (which, sadly is not on the list of brain healthy foods and must be consumed in strict moderation!) that is sold in many places with many flavors, sometimes knowing where to treat your hearing loss, and what type of technology is best for your hearing and cognitive needs, can leave people feeling confused and indecisive. Frankly, it is overwhelming.

Let's start with the most important question: where do I go to start the process of addressing my hearing loss?

Like everything in life, there are 'bad apples' that are Doctors of Audiology, Board Certified Hearing Specialists and Audioprosthologists. When a provider offers an inexpertly applied, standardized solution, they tend to be cheaper than the fees of a specialist that offers custom treatment plans. Cheaper, in hearing health care, implies there is an economic pressure on them to do treatment as quickly and as simply as possible, because they've 'cut it thin'.

In this case, it is worth remembering that the medical treatment provided for hearing loss has permanent. lifelong, and life-impacting consequences. This concerns your health, including your risk of dementia, risk of falls, your ability to feel accepted and socialize with others, and career longevity.

Keep it Real... and Reduce Stress!

We have all heard the expression "just grin and bear it". Another common expression that is specific to hearing loss is 'my hearing loss is normal for my age'. Neither of these is true nor acceptable.

Did you know that how you hear directly impacts your level of stress?

Longstanding research has unequivocally taught us that hearing loss and tinnitus increases stress, depression, anxiety, and isolation. We also know that people with hearing loss simply do less – less interacting with others. less socializing and less physical activity.

"...my ears buzz and hum all the time, day and night. I may tell you that I lead a wretched life. Over the past two years I have avoided almost all social contact because I can hardly say to people 'I am deaf'." ~ Ludwig van Beethoven



When possible, you always want to choose an audiologist or hearing specialist for treatment of your hearing loss.

Second, you may be asking: how do I know my hearing healthcare provider is an audiologist or hearing specialist?

It is a great question and a critical one to ask as you seek treatment for your hearing loss and/or tinnitus. Only audiologists and hearing specialists that are qualified to be a member-clinic of the Excellence In Audiology network can be found online at ExcellenceInAudiology.org. You can find an approved specialist in your area that focuses on the medical treatment of hearing loss.

Alternatively, you can ask your hearing care provider if he or she has completed a fellowship in audiology or if they underwent the training to become a hearing specialist. You can also check with your state licensing board.

Do your homework; be a "hearing detective" while on the hunt for such vital information. Look for the words "medical treatment of hearing loss" or ask your generalist for a referral to a hearing healthcare specialist (not someone who just sells hearing aids!). In urban and suburban areas, it will take minimal effort to find a specialist. In more remote, rural locations, your search might take you to another city or town. Do not be afraid to travel for the best health care - you are worth it (and your brain will thank vou).

Finally, most people will wonder: "how do I know which technology I should use to treat my hearing loss"?

This question does not have a simple answer. Just as we are all different, so too is it true that all of our hearing losses are different. Genetics, noise-exposure, medications, medical history, and comorbid disorders (i.e., diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer, etc.) all play a role in your hearing loss. Thus, there is no 'one answer' to this question. But there are guidelines that you must follow and must be sure to review with your hearing health care specialist.

First – the correct medical recommendation never considers age or cost. A thorough evaluation that determines your hearing loss and its impact on cognitive function (i.e., Stage 1 vs Stage 3) is the gold standard in hearing health care. Accept nothing less.

Second - traditional hearing aids suck. I hope you will excuse my language but my passion, my drive, is to wake up every day and provide each patient the highest level of hearing health care possible. Thus, I cannot help but be personally offended when I see a person that is under-treating his/her hearing loss with traditional hearing aids. These types of devices simply make sounds louder - and anybody with hearing loss will tell you - I do not need more volume; I need more clarity! If you are considering a cheap, off-the-shelf remedy, please remember – you get what you pay for!

Third – always ask if the technology you are being recommended is custom designed to address your hearing, tinnitus, and cognitive needs. In recent years, NeuroTechnology™ has become available that can truly target a patient's needs, from the earliest Stage 1 hearing loss to the most advanced Stage 4 hearing loss.

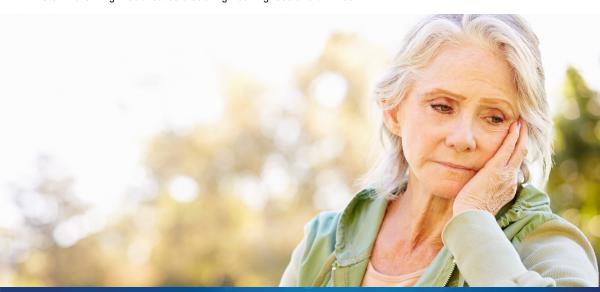
Understanding Hearing Disease



Diseases and disorders of the ear come in all shapes and sizes, degrees, and stages. While the most common cause' of hearing loss and tinnitus is aging, the truth is, it is not your age, rather it's your genes. The vast majority of people will inevitably suffer with hearing loss as they get older, not because of working in noise or going to too many rock concerts (not that they make matters any better!), rather most species of mammals (including us) carry a gene coded for age-related hearing loss. Presbycusis is the official medical jargon used by specialists when diagnosing this type of hearing loss.

The next most common cause of hearing loss is exposure to loud noises. Unfortunately, proper hearing health is not a common topic in most 'health classes', therefore the general public has no idea how noisy and how harmful most of our surroundings are. Another misnomer of hearing loss is that a 'hearing hangover' is something we rebound from. In case you are wondering, the 'hearing hangover' is when you go to a loud wedding, restaurant, concert, mow the lawn, use heavy equipment, etc. and your ears ring for several hours / days after being exposed to the noise. Most scientists and clinicians even believed that this temporary ringing in the ears was something you could recover from and go right back to hearing normally. Not true.

In the past 10-15 years, study after study has proven over and over again that these 'hearing hangovers' have a permanent effect on the auditory system and cause massive damage to the auditory system that cannot be recovered or healed. You might be saying to yourself 'is this for real.... my hearing was back to normal 2 days after that last wedding I went to.' The facts are that the damage was real, but that the damage will not manifest itself in the form of hearing loss for up to 2-3 decades! Hopefully, this has your attention now as you think back to all those loud restaurants you went to, the factory you worked in for 6 months, all the times you weed-wacked the lawn, and that rock band you were in when you were a teenager. When you combine your history of noise exposure (both big and small) plus your genetic predisposition to hearing loss as you age... you have a perfect storm brewing that creates disabling hearing loss and tinnitus.



Rounding out the next most common forms of hearing loss and tinnitus are medication-induced and suddenonset. While most prescription drugs are necessary and lifesaving / -prolonging, many common prescriptions can include an ototoxic ingredient (oto-toxic, i.e., toxic to the ear). Antibiotics such as Ciprofloxacin can be damaging to the ear. Many chemotherapies used for the treatment of cancers have an ingredient that is deadly to the cells in the ear. Even commonly available OTC drugs such as Aspirin and NSAIDS can increase the likelihood of developing hearing loss and tinnitus.

For most people who suffer with the instantaneous, life-altering, experience of sudden-onset hearing loss, the inability to hear out of one, or both ears, is a crushing blow. Many times, the diagnosis of this sudden-onset hearing loss and/or tinnitus includes the medical term 'idiopathic', which is the nice way of saying 'we have no idea why you woke up one day with this terrible hearing loss'. The most important advice for somebody who experiences a sudden change in hearing is to seek out the immediate assistance of a hearing health care specialist. It is possible, although not guaranteed, that immediate medical intervention can recover some or all of the hearing.

Hearing loss and tinnitus are common with age - it is estimated that approximately 50% of people between the ages of 60-70 years young have hearing loss, adults between the age of 70-80 years young have hearing loss, and nearly 80% over the age of 80 have hearing loss. Because hearing loss and tinnitus are progressive degenerative disorders, it can be slow enough for many people to even realize. Here are some of the early signs of hearing loss to look out for in you and your loved ones:

Signs of **Hearing Loss**

- Ringing in your ears
- **Blaming background** noise for not being able to follow the conversation
- Thinking EVERYBODY mumbles
- **Memory Loss**
- **Headaches**
- Loss of sleep
- Desire to isolate (b/c being around others is not as enjoyable anymore!)
- → Feelings of embarrassment and guilt







6 Things You Should Know About **Treating Your Hearing Loss & Tinnitus**



1. Treating your hearing loss and tinnitus.... does not have to cost a lot of money.

Today's treatment options are affordable. Most plans cost less than \$6 per day! Many offices now offer subscription programs designed to provide care-free all-inclusive hearing care treatment. This small investment in yourself pays you back in long-term dividends by increasing your quality of life. social, emotional, physical, and cognitive health.

2. Treating your hearing loss and tinnitus.... works.

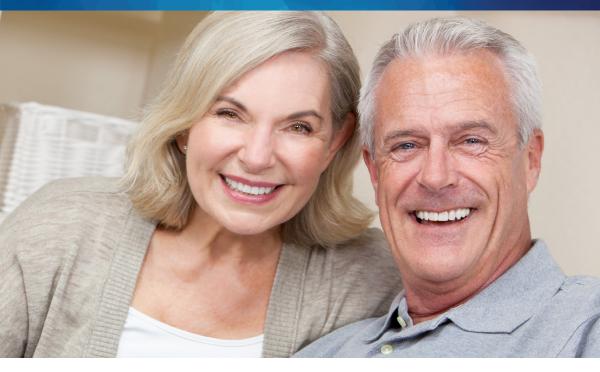
Treating your hearing loss and tinnitus is not what it used to be. Gone are the days of the beige bananas and things in your ears that endlessly whistle! Advanced Neurotechnology™ and diagnostic procedures decrease your 'time in the chair' and increase your ability to hear and live, quickly!

3. Treating your hearing loss and tinnitus.... will NOT cause further damage.

Some people worry that treating hearing loss can somehow make it worse. This misnomer seems to stem from the past days of traditional hearing aids that simply made things louder – which could increase the likelihood of noise-induced damage. Custom prescribed technology will not increase or worsen your hearing loss and tinnitus.

4. Treating your hearing loss and tinnitus.... may reduce your risk of dementia.

Since the first published data in 2011 that indicated a strong correlation of hearing loss and dementia. the obvious follow-up question is: 'if I treat my hearing loss, will it reduce my risk?'. In 2018 the European Dementia Commission unequivocally stated that the early treatment of hearing loss is the most modifiable factor for the prevention of dementia.



5. Treating your hearing loss and tinnitus... may reduce your risk of falling.

Much like with the question of cognitive decline, many clinicians and scientists have wondered 'if hearing loss increases the risk of falling, does treating hearing loss reduce the risk?' The medical treatment of hearing loss can provide the clarity, auditory awareness and cognitive stimulation required to reduce the risk of falls. Another older adult falls every 13 seconds, it is time to slow down the clock!

6. Treating your hearing loss and tinnitus.... CANNOT WAIT.

If you made it this far in this document, you know by now that the medical treatment of hearing loss and tinnitus are not optional, not elective, and cannot wait. As time passes, this progressive and degenerative disorder wreaks havoc on your brain and your life. Do not wait another day.



DID YOU KNOW...

The medical treatment of hearing loss and tinnitus is more accessible and affordable than it has ever been. When asked, people most often cite 'price' as the reason for not moving forward with treatment. This is not acceptable.

In 2018, Advantage Leasing Program was created to help treat every patient. This simple and affordable program does not care how much money you make (or made), where you live or what your credit score is.

Now that you know the medical treatment of your hearing loss and tinnitus is easy, accessible, affordable, and necessary... go do something about it. Today!

A USER'S MANUAL

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