



NEPEAN HEARING

DECEMBER 2016

Newsletter: Volume 8

Hello again from all of us at Nepean Hearing.

We have had a busy time these last few months and expect to get busier leading up to Christmas. Just a reminder to book any appointments you need ahead of time and not leave it to the last minute.

In the last few months David has been to a conference in Brisbane where he learnt about small business enterprise, workplace wellness

and Superannuation. Tony has been to a conference in New Zealand about how small businesses can best market themselves and compete with big companies (he reports he even went paragliding but we haven't seen any photos for proof).

Christmas is fast approaching! We hope everyone wears their hearing aids to all their Christmas functions (except pool parties!). Refer to the story on page 2 of the newsletter for some handy tips.

Our last trading day for this year will be December 23rd and we will re-open January 3rd. Please make sure you have enough batteries, wax filters and other bits and pieces to last through the break.

Enjoy the newsletter and have a VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Tony, David, Sara, Donna & Courtney.



Did you know.....Dolphins have families and social groups. They speak in different 'dialects' and have personalised whistles for each other. Like us, communication is critical to a dolphin's wellbeing. Recent studies conducted at Sea Word Florida have shown that dolphins with hearing loss are more likely to become separated from their family groups. 60% of dolphins that had become stranded on beaches had severe-profound hearing loss.

How to best manage hearing loss at Christmas events

Spending time with family is very important over Christmas. But for those with hearing loss, these lovely occasions can quickly turn into lonely struggles to take part in conversation.

If you have a family member who is hard of hearing, take it upon yourself to make sure they feel included at the family lunch or dinner. Even if they wear hearing aids, they still might need you to put in some extra effort! We've assembled a list of tips for you to keep in mind.

- When speaking to someone with hearing loss, face him or her directly.
- Do not attempt to speak to them from another room or out of their line of sight.
- Speak clearly and naturally. Make sure to enunciate your words!
- Keep your hands and other obstructions away from your face. Hands, chewing gum and food can make it hard for someone who is hard of hearing to understand you.
- Take it in turns to speak. Talking over others can easily confuse the listener.
- Do not shout or over-exaggerate facial expressions. This can come across as rude and aggressive.

[Ensure the room where the event will take place is well lit](#)

Quite often, people with hearing loss need to be able to see your face when having a conversation so they can lip-read when necessary.

[Consider holding the event outside](#)

When a lot of people gather indoors, the sound of their voices reverberating against the walls can make it very difficult for someone who is hard of hearing to understand anything. Outdoor events are generally much quieter.

[Control background noise](#)

It is generally very difficult for those with hearing loss to hear over loud background noise. Do not play loud music, and keep other external sounds to a minimum. If the family function is taking place in a restaurant, make sure it is not a noisy one.

[Check the seating arrangements](#)

If you are organising a sit down dinner or lunch, consider the size and shape of the table and how it will affect your family member with hearing loss. For example, a large round table makes it difficult for them to carry on conversations. It is also a good idea to seat them with people who will be patient and repeat things if necessary.

By taking these tips into consideration, you can help create the perfect family lunch or dinner to accommodate your family member with hearing loss.



Hard of hearing? It's not your ears, it's your brain

-study by the University of Maryland taken from www.sciencedaily.com

In an interdisciplinary study published by the *Journal of Neurophysiology*, researchers found that adults aged 61-73 with normal hearing scored significantly worse on speech understanding in noisy environments than adults aged 18-30 with normal hearing.

Evidence of degraded representation of speech in noise, in the aging midbrain and cortex is part of ongoing research into the so-called cocktail party problem, or the brain's ability to focus on and process a particular stream of speech in the middle of a noisy environment.

In the younger subject group, speech was clearly discernable against a noisy background in the noisy environment.

But in the older subject group, the quality of the response to the speech signal was degraded even when in the quiet environment, and the response was even worse in the noisy environment.

For older listeners, even when there isn't any noise, the brain is already having trouble processing the speech.

Neural signals recorded from the cortex showed that younger adults could process speech well in a relatively short amount of time. But the auditory cortex of older test subjects took longer to represent the same amount of information.

Older people need more time to figure out what a speaker is saying. They are dedicating more of their resources and exerting more effort than younger adults when they are listening to speech.

This eroding of brain function appears to be typical for older adults and a natural part of the aging process. The researchers are now looking into whether brain training techniques may be able to help older adults improve their speech comprehension.

Simple courtesies can help. Since being able to see as well as hear someone speaking helps with speech processing, it's a good idea to look directly at older adults and make sure you have their attention before talking with them.

The older brain drops part of the speech signal, even if the ears captured it all just fine. When someone can see you speaking, instead of only hearing you, their visual system can sometimes make up for that loss.

Holding conversations in a quiet environment helps as well.



The reason you may have to say something twice when talking to older family members at Christmas dinner may not be because of their hearing.

Researchers have determined that something is going on in the brains of typical older adults that causes them to struggle to follow speech amidst background noise, even when their hearing would be considered normal on a clinical assessment.

Toy Box Challenge (Article taken from Hearing HQ magazine)



A range of dolls are now on offer that celebrate real beauty instead of Barbie-like perfection. But while these toys (see the Lammily dolls pictured) show normal flaws like acne, bruises and birthmarks, there are few playthings that depict flaws or disabilities.

British journalist Rebecca Atkinson, who wears hearing aids, aims to challenge this by creating a website that will push for toys that mirror youngsters with disabilities. Atkinson's team have tweaked everyday toys so that they now have hearing aids, guide dogs and wheelchairs. This will hopefully show large toy manufacturers what can be done to make the industry more inclusive. "I'd grown up wearing hearing aids and never seen myself represented anywhere. There were no deaf people on TV, in the books that I read or the toys that I played with, explains Atkinson. The toy industry shuts out children with disabilities, we want to change that," she says.

The 'Toy Like Me' website has already gained the support of toy giant Playmobil as well as Julia Donaldson, author of the bestselling children's book, *The Gruffalo*.



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Contact Details:

Phone: 9783 7520 or 5996 1117

Website: www.nepeanhearing.com.au

Email: info@nepeanhearing.com.au

Locations:

Frankston: 13 Hastings Rd

Cranbourne: 184 South Gippsland Hwy

Mt Eliza: Ti-Tree Family Doctors,
118 Mount Eliza Way

Hastings: Community Health Centre,
185 High St

We also have visiting sites at Baxter Village, St Johns Village, Opal by the Bay, Lynbrook Park, Southern Cross Care Lynbrook & Langford Grange Cranbourne.