

# Yale Hearing and Balance Center



Yale School of Medicine



Yale Medical Group

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***“The thing about hearing loss is that no one can see it. Most people are so impatient; they just assume that the person with hearing loss is being rude, or slow-witted.”***

**~Marion Ross**

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## Making the most of telephone communication with a hearing impairment

One of the most difficult listening situations for hearing impaired listeners is telephone use. Our patients often express concern that they are unable to communicate effectively with loved ones, business professionals and even emergency personnel. In Connecticut, one option is a Captioned Telephone service, or CapTel, for short.

CapTel is a telephone technology that allows people to receive word-for-word captions of their telephone conversations. It is similar to the concept of captioning on television, where spoken words appear as text on the screen. The CapTel phone looks like and works like a traditional

telephone, with callers talking and listening to each other, but with live captioning.

To use the phone, CapTel users place a call in the same way as dialing a traditional phone. As they dial, the CapTel phone automatically connects to a captioning service. When the other party answers, they will hear the voice of the hearing impaired caller as normal. When the second party responds, their voice is translated into captioning for the hearing impaired user to read. A specialized telephone is needed. This telephone is designed to



interact with the CapTel captioning service. However, the telephone can also be used in a traditional manner for others living in the house that are not hearing impaired. There are no specialized service requirements. CapTel can be

connected to a standard analog telephone port that is commonly found in households. CapTel is now also available for mobile telephone devices. For more information about this service please ask your audiologist at the **Yale Hearing and Balance Center** or visit: [www.captionedtelephone.com](http://www.captionedtelephone.com) or call 1-800-233-9130.

## How do I know if my hearing is “bad enough” to do something about it?

Brandeis University researchers published a study in the *Current Directions in Psychological Science* journal that concluded that older adults with a mild to moderate hearing loss expend so much cognitive energy on

hearing accurately that their ability to remember spoken language suffers. The study showed that even when adults could hear the words well, their ability to remember those words was poorer in comparison to other individu-

als of the same age with good hearing. These results support the importance of treating hearing loss. Make an appointment to have your hearing checked at the **Yale Hearing and Balance Center** today.

## Spring forecast for hearing aids: heat and humidity can cause big problems

Now that the Spring thaw is upon us, warmer temperatures and humidity will be creeping back into the forecast. Hearing aids don't mix with warm weather and humidity. Moisture is one the top causes of hearing aid problems. Perspiration and humidity can result in a damp ear canal. This moisture can collect in your hearing aid. For example, if



you go from a warm outside environment to a cool air-conditioned room, condensation may form. Although the internal circuitry is sealed, sometimes it is not enough to prevent this from happening. Moisture can cause the hearing aid to cut in and out, creating an intermit-

tency problem. In some cases, damage can occur to the entire hearing aid. Dry and store units, available at **Yale Hearing and Balance Center**, will dehumidify, sanitize and protect your hearing aids. The dry and store kit is easy to use. Simply open your hearing aid battery door and remove the battery. Put the battery in a safe place. Place your hearing aids in the dry and store overnight. This unit will help prevent problems from moisture and improve the sound quality of hearing aids with daily use. To order a dry and store unit, contact your the **Yale Hearing and Balance Center** today.

## Custom swimming protection: take the plunge!

It's important to consider your hearing health care before taking the plunge this summer. Custom swim plugs are particularly important for children with pressure equalization (PE) tubes. PE tubes connect the inner and outer ear, so bacteria from water can spread causing irritation and/or infections. Custom swim plugs protect your ears particularly when swimming in lake

and ocean water, which is not chemically treated. Custom swim plugs keep your ears safe and dry. To order custom swim plugs, call the **Yale Hearing and Balance Center**. An audiologist will make an exact earmold impression of your ear. Then, a laboratory



will create your custom swim plugs. Custom swim plugs take about two weeks for delivery and they are available in variety of styles, sizes and colors. Make an appointment today so that your custom swim plugs are ready for camp, vacation and pool swimming.

## Can hearing aids help relieve tinnitus symptoms?

*Adapted from the Better Hearing Institute*

Tinnitus is the perception of sound in the ear. Some patients describe tinnitus as ringing, humming, buzzing or hissing. Tinnitus can occur sporadically or in more severe cases, it is heard constantly. Most patients complain that it is most annoying when in quiet environments. For many years, tinnitus

has been treated by prescribing hearing aids. In a recent Better Hearing Institute survey on hearing aids and tinnitus, six out of ten patients reported some relief of their tinnitus when using hearing aids. Two of the ten reported major relief. These findings are particularly important considering nine million

American adults with hearing loss have not sought a solution to their hearing problem because they also have tinnitus and mistakenly believe that nothing can be done about it. Make an appointment at the **Yale Hearing and Balance Center** today to assess your tinnitus and possible solutions.

## Migraine associated dizziness

Dizziness and balance problems can have many different causes including vision loss, knee or hip problems, adverse reaction to medication, and inner ear disease. One of the most frequent causes of vertigo and imbalance is migraine. Migraine is commonly associated with a debilitating headache, vision disturbances, and severe fatigue. It usually requires an individual to retire to a dark quiet room for hours until the occurrence passes. However, some individuals with migraine suffer infrequent headaches or no headaches at all, yet they have chronic imbalance, attacks of spinning, motion sickness, or they “just don’t feel right.”

Migraine is a condition that involves the nervous system and the

blood supply to portions of the brain. To determine whether an individual’s dizziness is related to a migraine condition, a neurological examination and a number of balance tests are usually required.

The **Yale Hearing and Balance Center** uses a multi-disciplinary approach to assessing patients with

dizziness, combining the specialties of audiology, neurology, and otology.

Our audiologists and physicians specialize in diagnosis and treatment of even the most difficult and chronic balance problems. Please call the **Yale Hearing and**



**Balance Center** to schedule an evaluation.

## Hearing aids and battery life

Many patients ask why hearing aid batteries must be replaced every one to four weeks, while watch batteries last a year or longer. Hearing aids draw more current than watches do. A watch battery ticks off the seconds with no variation.

*Three quick tips to maximize the hearing aid battery life*

A hearing aid functions continually and must power a mini-amplifier, microphone, speaker and computer chip. Although the two devices may use the same types of batteries, a hearing aid uses much more energy each day. To make the most of battery life, remember

to turn your hearing aids off once you take them out for the evening. In most cases, this is done by opening the battery door. Remember to not remove the protective sticker from a new battery until you are ready to use it. Have regular clean and check appointments at **Yale Hearing and Balance Center** to be sure that your hearing aids are working properly.

## Hearing aids and taxes? Is there any help?

As April 15 looms, many patients wonder if there is a tax credit for hearing aids. With an average cost of \$1800 including fitting and follow-up, hearing rehabilitation can have unexpectedly high costs. Currently, the Hearing Aid Tax Credit (H.R. 2329 and S. 1410) legislation has been drafted with these concerns in

mind. If enacted, it would provide a \$500 tax credit per hearing aid, once every five years for dependents and for those aged 55 years and older. The tax credit has wide bipartisan support; in fact, it is supported by nearly every hearing health care organization and advocacy group. However, your support

is also needed. To learn more about contacting your state Senators and Representatives about the Hearing Aid Tax Credit, please visit [www.hearingaidtaxcredit.org](http://www.hearingaidtaxcredit.org) and make your voice heard.



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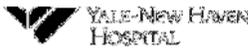
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Yale Hearing and Balance's newsletter is written to inform the public and the Center's patients, donors and staff on current items of interest. Yale Hearing and Balance complies with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996. If you do not wish to receive this newsletter please call Erika Nair at (203) 785-2467 or email [erika.nair@yale.edu](mailto:erika.nair@yale.edu).

## We're listening...

Please submit your questions to [erika.nair@yale.edu](mailto:erika.nair@yale.edu). If your question is chosen you will receive three packages of hearing aid or cochlear implant batteries free of charge.



Hearing in background noise can be a challenging for both hearing impaired and normal hearing listeners. Background noise makes it difficult to focus on sounds that are relevant. Here are some tips to increase your

ability to hear while in background noise.

1. Ask to be seated in quiet areas. For example, when eating in a restaurant ask to be seated next away from heavy traffic areas such as doorways and kitchens, or if possible, ask to be seated in high-backed booth.
2. Sit near the front or by the person speaking. This will allow

for you to use non-verbal cues, such as facial expressions, to make the most of the message.

3. Request that the lighting be adjusted. Dim lighting, like distance, prevents listeners from being able to use non-verbal cues.
4. Use assistive listening devices (ALDs) whenever possible. Most movie theaters, performance halls and even some churches and synagogues are equipped with ALDs that are available for no charge. Check with management prior to your event.

5. Relax when in conversation. If you are unable to understand the speaker, calmly ask specific questions to help repair the conversation. For example, instead of simply asking, "What?" try saying, "I heard that you have plans for your birthday, but was unable to make out what they are. Please repeat that part."
6. Let family and friends know that they can help by speaking in a normal tone, looking directly at you and being in close range, and most of all, being patient.

For further help, contact your audiologist at **Yale Hearing and Balance Center** for suggestions.

### What can I do to hear better in noisy situations?