

HEARING ASSOCIATES
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COVID-19 Update

The team at Hearing Associates continues to take steps to protect our patients and staff. Your well-being is our top priority, and we want to help ensure your safety while we address your hearing needs. We follow all cleaning/antiviral procedures set forth by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as a daily practice.

Our safety measures include:

- Scheduling appointments to limit the number of patients in our offices
- Separating chairs in the waiting rooms to facilitate social distancing
- Requiring the use of face masks in our facilities
- Screening patients for possible symptoms
- Rescheduling appointments for at-risk patients
- Limiting the number of people who accompany patients to their appointments

Enjoy Curbside Service

Our drive-through service is still available at our Mason City clinic. The service is available Monday through Friday, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. You'll receive top-rated services from one of our friendly team members right from the comfort of your vehicle. Call 641-494-5180 when you arrive, and someone will come out to collect your hearing aids. Your cooperation significantly improves our effort to limit the number of people in our waiting room.

We're Opening Another Office!

Hearing Associates is opening an additional clinic in Albert Lea. The new office is currently under construction, but we should be moved in sometime this July. Keep your eye on our website and Facebook page for more information as the project gets closer to completion. We can't wait for you to visit!

Let Us Know How We're Doing

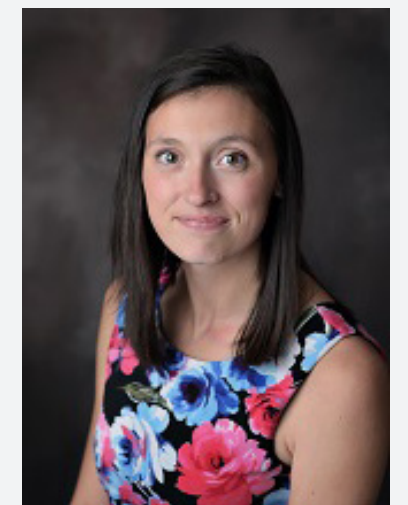
We rely on honest input from patients just like you! Whether you want to share a quality experience or tell us what we need to improve, please let us know how we're doing by leaving us an online review.



Brittany Ruehlow Graduates LNI

Our very own Brittany Ruehlow completed the 2021 Leadership North Iowa (LNI) training program! LNI works with participants to create networking opportunities and partnerships among businesses across North Iowa. Those who complete the three-month program are trained for leadership roles and responsibilities.

As one of our Front Office Professionals, Brittany is responsible for managing administrative tasks and welcoming our patients. Thanks to her time with LNI, she has an added edge of providing community engagement she can put to use every day.



Call (800) 621-6424 or visit HearingAssociatesMC.com

Providing excellent customer service & quality hearing aids to our patients since 1987. Hearing Associates, P.C. is your hearing healthcare expert in Mason City, Northern Iowa, and Albert Lea, Minnesota.

Hear in the
Now News
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Good Nutrition can Help Hearing Loss

Good nutrition can mitigate the side effects of hearing loss and is an essential part of a comprehensive approach to effective treatment.

How Poor Nutrition Affects Your Hearing

A lack of nutrition exacerbates health conditions that negatively impact your hearing. Supporting your overall health allows your body to protect your ears.

Circulation: Healthy circulation brings blood and oxygen to your inner ear, which it needs to convert sounds into signals for your brain. A diet high in sodium restricts blood flow and damages the blood vessels in your ears.

Inflammation: Diabetes and heart disease have inflammatory side effects that harm hearing. Inflammation damages the delicate tissue in your ears and can cause chronic ear infections and permanent hearing loss.

Nutrients That Support Healthy Hearing

A poor diet lowers your body's ability to fight off free radicals – unstable atoms that damage cells and cause illness. Consuming foods with essential vitamins and minerals allows your body to stop free radicals from damaging your ears. Here are some nutrients that will protect your hearing and boost your immunity.

Zinc:

- Promotes cell growth and healing
- Improves sensorineural hearing loss and reduces tinnitus symptoms
- Helps fight infection
- Found in foods like almonds, cashews, beef and dark chocolate

Magnesium:

- Creates a barrier over the inner ear that protects it from free radicals
- Found in avocados, nuts, seeds and whole grains

Potassium:

- Supports your heartbeat and circulation
- Protects your inner ear
- Regulates fluid in body tissue
- Found in bananas, potatoes, tomatoes, melons, oranges and low-fat milk

Folic Acid:

- Metabolizes an amino acid that restricts blood flow
- May slow the onset of age-related hearing loss
- Found in spinach, broccoli and asparagus



Driving Safely with Hearing Loss

Spring and summer are some of the busiest times of year for travel, especially for drivers. You rely on your ears while you're behind the wheel more than you realize. Honking horns, emergency sirens, interior car alerts and turn signals give you a sense of your environment inside and outside of your vehicle.

But hearing loss affects your ability to perceive sounds while driving, which puts you and other drivers at risk. Here are tips that will help keep you safe on the road.



1. Maintain your hearing aids. Keeping your devices in working order will give your ears the best shot at picking up important sounds. Your audiologist can adjust your hearing aids during appointments, especially if you're experiencing feedback. Keep spare batteries with you in case your hearing aids need fresh ones. Don't attempt to switch batteries while driving.

2. Turn down the radio. Listening to music on your way to work or during a long drive is great, but it can be distracting. Long-term exposure to loud noises, like your car radio, can exacerbate your hearing loss. Music also masks external sounds like sirens and horns.

3. Roll up the windows. Wind creates a lot of noise that can prove troublesome to drivers with hearing loss. You may also crank the radio louder if you drive with your windows down, which only compounds the problem.

4. Keep conversations to a minimum. Trying to keep up with conversations while you're driving puts strain on your brain. You're taking in lots of stimuli, which causes mental fatigue. Limiting conversations in the car allows your brain to focus more on environmental noises.

5. Limit distractions. Multitasking and driving are never a good combination. Any task that takes your focus away from the road can have deadly consequences for you and other drivers.

6. Sync your hearing aids. It's best to pull over before you use your phone in the car. Several hearing aid manufacturers offer Bluetooth connectivity so you can make hands-free calls. It's also an excellent way to stream GPS audio to your hearing aids, so you don't have to look at your phone for directions.

The Ins and Outs of Bluetooth Hearing Aids

Bluetooth is no longer just for the busy individual who needs to make hands-free calls on the go. Now, hearing aid manufacturers continue to develop Bluetooth capabilities, so hearing devices can connect to smart technology and deliver quality audio.

The Basics of Bluetooth Hearing Aids

Bluetooth technology offers a wireless connection between hearing aids and smart devices like iPhones, iPads, Androids and more. These devices previously required a separate adapter worn around your neck or carried on your person. Now their connectivity extends up to 30 feet and usually doesn't require an adapter.

Bluetooth features include:

- Call answering and audio streaming
- Remote hearing aid adjustment through phone apps
- Volume, bass and treble controls
- Background noise reduction
- Directional mic control
- Tinnitus therapy programs

Hearing Aid Styles And Bluetooth

At Hearing Associates, we offer hearing aids styles, including:

- Completely-in-the-canal (CIC)
- In-the-canal (ITC)
- In-the-ear (ITE)
- Receiver-in-the-ear (RITE)

CIC, ITE and IIC hearing aids are compatible with Bluetooth technology. Depending on your hearing loss level, your audiologist may prescribe a specific style of hearing aid over another. Make sure you ask whether the Bluetooth feature is available for your devices.

Benefits Of Bluetooth Hearing Aids

Hearing aids are not just sound amplifiers. You have more control over dependable, quality sound no matter the source or environment. You can adjust your hearing aids, listen to music and track your health all with a single piece of technology.

Some Bluetooth hearing aids send notifications when your devices are low on battery power and can even help you locate a misplaced device.

You can also make hands-free calls, which is especially important for your safety while you're driving. As more states have banned the use of hand-held devices in vehicles, it's crucial for people with hearing loss to find a safe way to make and answer calls without distracting themselves while they're driving.

Building Connections for Better Hearing Month

May is Better Hearing Month, and this year's focus is on building connections. They're an essential part of effective communication and support mental and emotional health. But nurturing relationships can be difficult when you have hearing loss.

Your Relationships

Hearing loss affects your ability to communicate with friends and family. You may feel embarrassed about asking friends to repeat themselves or frustrated when you must remind your spouse to speak up.

Daily communication becomes daunting and avoiding it impacts personal connections. This is especially true for partners, spouses and significant others who interact with your hearing loss daily. Lack of communication can cause tension and lead to miscommunication and isolation.

Untreated hearing loss has also been linked to depression, dementia and cognitive decline, which further impede your ability to communicate with loved ones.

Socializing with Hearing Loss

You may experience social withdrawal if you have hearing loss. Background noises and multiple speakers make it hard to localize sound and hold a conversation.

If you have hearing loss, you may rely on a loved one to help you navigate conversations. Having someone who understands your condition helps ease the stress of staying engaged, but it also puts pressure on your hearing partner.

Improving Communication

May is also Mental Health Awareness Month. Poor mental health often goes hand-in-hand with hearing loss, which is why taking care of your hearing health can improve your quality of life. Having a conversation about mental health or illness can be challenging, but it will be even more difficult if you can't hear.

Good hearing allows you to engage with the people around you and improve communication, which means you can express possible concerns about your mental health more easily. Your family, friends, neighbors or coworkers may, in turn, express their struggle with mental health issues.

Getting a hearing test and starting treatment will put you on the path to better communication. And an audiologist can recommend hearing aids that meet your unique needs.