

**HEARING ASSOCIATES**  
250 Crescent Drive, Suite 100  
Mason City, IA 50401



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# Hear in the Now Announcements

## Changing Office Operations At Hearing Associates

Office operations continue to change daily at Hearing Associates. We are currently seeing patients in-office and walk-ins are now available. We encourage patients, especially those who are at higher risk to take advantage of our curbside service.

Hearing Associates has offered curbside service for hearing aid maintenance at our Mason City clinic beginning in April. Please contact us before you come in. We ask that you pull into the drive-through between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday - Friday. Call 641-494-5180 once you arrive, and we will come to collect your devices.

You will be notified once your devices are ready for pick up, and we will bring them to your vehicle. This service is open to ALL current hearing aid users who need hearing aid cleaning, repair, or further instruction on how to use their devices properly. Please note that our waiting room will remain closed unless you have an appointment. For now, face masks are required to gain entry to the facility, and we appreciate you bringing one with you.

Please call our office and visit [HearingAssociatesMC.com](http://HearingAssociatesMC.com) for the latest information. We appreciate your support and patience during this time and look forward to continuing our top-rated care and services. Thank you!



## Telehealth Options Available

During this unique season, Hearing Associates can assist patients in office, curbside and from the comfort of their own homes. Our remote services include:

- Remote Programming
- Telehealth Appointments
- Phone Consultations

Call our offices and ask us about these digital and remote services.



### CURBSIDE HEARING AID CLINIC

MONDAY-FRIDAY  
8AM-5PM



250 South Crescent Drive, Suite 100  
Mason City, IA

641-494-5180



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

Summer 2020



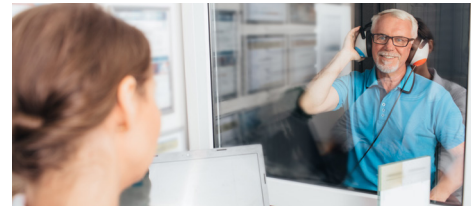
## Hearing Loss And Life Expectancy

The relationship between hearing loss and poor health indicates that those who struggle to hear may have a lower life expectancy. Hearing loss is often an indication of other health conditions. That means ignoring your hearing loss is causing you to miss signals your body is sending you.

### Health Conditions And Hearing Loss

Hearing loss has been linked to other physical and psychological conditions.

A recent study suggested that hearing and vision impairments have the most profound effect on an older individual's health.



Heart disease and high blood pressure often accompany hearing loss because of their effect on the blood vessels in the ear canal. Not enough blood gets to the ears because the heart is working to pump blood to the rest of your body. These conditions are exacerbated by smoking, which shrinks blood vessels.

Psychological conditions like dementia, Alzheimer's, and cognitive decline are also believed to be connected to hearing loss. When your brain is working overtime to try and interpret sound, that leaves less capacity to understand and engage in conversation. Hearing loss may also cause people to isolate themselves and can cause depression.

### Improving Your Life Expectancy

Seeking treatment for hearing loss is your best course of action. Consult an audiologist about getting a hearing evaluation and discuss hearing aid options. Determining the cause of your hearing loss may uncover other health conditions you didn't know you had.

When you can hear clearly, you keep your mind engaged by socializing and interacting with others and decrease your risk of cognitive decline.

Hearing evaluations will help you and your audiologist determine the best treatment options, like hearing aids. Hearing devices come in a variety of styles and capabilities, so you can find a device to match your lifestyle needs.

## Hearing Loss May Be Affecting Your Relationships

Having a conversation with someone hard of hearing can be frustrating. The person with hearing loss may be embarrassed or ashamed of having to ask others to repeat themselves. They may also retreat from conversing altogether.

Loved ones may be left feeling misunderstood or ignored by those with hearing loss. It can also lead to significant miscommunications about health, family, or daily life.

### Why Don't They Notice?

Hearing loss can occur slowly over time. Someone with hearing loss may not realize they aren't catching sounds they used to be able to hear. Often, it's those closest to someone with hearing loss who notices it first.

Take note if you or a loved one:

- Frequently ask others to repeat themselves or speak up
- Have trouble conversing in noisy environments
- Turn the TV or radio up to an excessive volume
- Don't hear sounds like a knock at the door or the phone ringing

### How You Can Help

Treating hearing loss is not as easy as popping in hearing aids and requires patience and support from all involved. Be receptive to what your loved ones are telling you if you have hearing loss. But more importantly, be patient with yourself.

**Don't enable.** It may be instinctive to help your loved one understand and be understood. However, this only puts a band-aid over a more complicated

issue. Communicating for someone with hearing loss can make them feel less self-sufficient too.

**Visit an audiologist together.** It's essential to work as a team when you're transitioning into treatment. The information, appointments, and devices can become overwhelming. Your loved one will benefit from your perspective and perception during their appointments, and they'll love the support.

**Help them with hearing aids.** Learn about the different types of hearing aids, styles, and new technology like Bluetooth. Understanding how your loved one's hearing aids work can help you troubleshoot problems. Be mindful of how long they're wearing their hearing aids each day and help them remember to charge or replace batteries.

## What You Should Know Before Buying Hearing Aids

**It will take time to get used to your hearing aids.** Your hearing won't be crystal clear right after you put in your new hearing aids. Your ears will need to adjust to the size of the devices, and they'll likely need to be calibrated to suit your needs. Noises may seem intense because you hear sounds you haven't heard for some time.

**Hearing aids come in different shapes, styles, and sizes.** The style of your hearing aid will be determined by your degree of hearing loss and your preference. Styles include behind-the-ear, in-the-canal, in-the-ear, and receiver-in-the-ear. Designs are sleeker, so you won't have to worry about visible devices. Some hearing aids are custom-made to fit your ear. Some hearing aids also have Bluetooth

connectivity, health tracking, and music streaming.

**You can take your hearing aids for a test run.** It's good to have the option of a trial period if you're new to hearing aids. It allows you time to try your devices and see how comfortably they fit your ears before you fully invest in your purchase. Consult your audiologist about trial period costs and if the fees will be applied to your purchase.

**Some hearing aids come with rechargeable batteries.** If you're worried about replacing batteries or remembering to pack spares, then rechargeable batteries may be worth considering. Rechargeable options may differ in price, so consider the long- and short-term benefits before

you purchase. These batteries provide consistent charge and convenience since you can dock them overnight for the next day.

### Today's hearing aids are reliable and more durable than in the past.

Directional mics clarify sound and adjust to your changing listening environment. You won't have to worry about analog technology delivering garbled sounds. Some devices are water-resistant – though it's still good practice to keep your hearing aids away from moisture.



## Making Communication Clear When Your Mask Isn't

Masks are useful for protecting you from the spread of COVID-19, but they're not the best for communicating. Half of your face is covered, and speech is muffled. These factors make communication difficult for anyone, especially people with hearing loss.

### Find A Good Listening Environment.

Trying to hold a conversation in a noisy environment is hard, even without masks. It's just about impossible when you factor in a mask. Find a quiet space or move away from noisy crowds to speak with someone. And a quiet space is essential since social distancing mandates we all put more space between ourselves.

### Use Body Language to Communicate.

Since most of your face is covered, lip-reading and facial cues can't convey your message. Using your hands and other body

languages can communicate your mood and meaning. Use context clues as well to clarify your meaning.

### Speak Clearly And Slowly.

Shouting won't help and will only cause frustration. Trying to shout affects the inflection that gives sentence context. You may have to rephrase a muddled sentence as well. Take your time during a conversation if you're speaking with a mask. Slowing down allows the other person more time to process what you're saying. You'll likely be asked, "What did you say?" several times if you're talking a mile a minute.

### Use Technology And Clear Masks.

Talk to text apps will come in handy while we're all sporting masks for the foreseeable future. New technology can transcribe speech in real-time so you

can continue your conversation with ease. Assistive portable listening devices can amplify the range of your hearing aids or cochlear implants as well.

A campaign to make transparent masks more readily available to medical personnel and the public is also slowly gaining ground. Clear face shields and masks with clear plastic panels allow for health safety while keeping the wearer's mouth visible. Groups like the Ida Institute continue to push the necessity for clear face masks and encourage national health organizations to throw in their support.

**Be Patient.** Asking others to repeat themselves can shorten tempers and cause miscommunications. Take your time during conversations and be patient with others. Those with hearing devices are likely already struggling with wearing masks.