

The Hidden Risks of Hearing Loss

Not hearing well isn't just frustrating: it can bring surprising health risk. Here's what you need to know.

Hearing loss is frustrating for those who have it and for their loved ones. But recent research from Johns Hopkins reveals that it also is linked with walking problems, falls and even dementia.

In a study that tracked 639 adults for nearly 12 years, Johns Hopkins expert Frank Lin, M.D., Ph.D., and his colleagues found that mild hearing loss doubled dementia risk, moderate loss tripled risk, and people with a severe hearing impairment were five times more likely to develop dementia.

The Links Between Hearing and Health

"Brain scans show us that hearing loss may contribute to a faster rate of atrophy in the brain," Lin says. "Hearing loss also contributes to social isolation. You may not want to be with people as much, and when you are you may not engage in conversation as much. These factors may contribute to dementia."

As you walk, your ears pick up subtle cues that help with balance. Hearing loss mutes these important signals, Lin notes. "It also makes your brain work harder just to process sound. This subconscious multitasking may interfere with some of the mental processing needed to walk safely."

Hearing Aid Myths That Hold You Back

Can hearing aids reduce these risks? Lin hopes to find out in a new study, still in the planning stages. "These studies have never been done before," he notes. "What we do know is that there's no downside to using hearing aids. They help most people who try them. And in those people, they can make all the difference in the world—allowing people to reengage with friends and family and to be more involved again."

Although nearly 27 million Americans age 50 and older have hearing loss, only one in seven uses a hearing aid. If you think your hearing has diminished, it's worth making an appointment with an audiologist for a hearing check, Lin says. If you have hearing loss, don't let the following myths keep you

"My hearing's not *that* bad."

Hearing aid users wait, on average, 10 years before getting help for hearing loss. But during that time, communication with loved ones becomes more difficult, and isolation and health risks increase. "Our findings emphasized just how important it is to be proactive in addressing any hearing declines over time," says Lin.

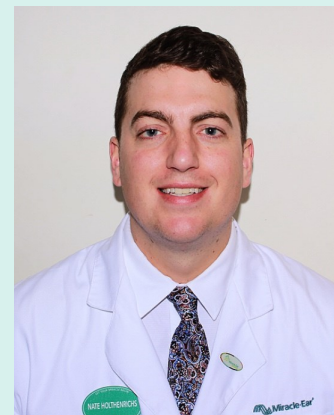
"Wearing hearing aids means I'm old, and I'm not ready for that."

It's normal to feel worried that hearing loss means you're aging—and to want to hide it. Plenty of people with a hearing impairment sit silently rather than joining in conversations and activities, because they fear that hearing problems will make them seem helpless or less than competent. The truth: Connecting with others can help your brain stay younger and keep you involved with life.

"I heard that hearing aids are difficult to use."

There is a breaking-in period as you—and your central auditory system and brain—adjust to life with hearing aids. That's why most doctors and hearing centers include a trial period, so you can be sure the type you've chosen—whether it's a miniature behind-the-ear model or one that fits into your ear—is right for you.

Consultant of the Month Nate Holthenrichs



Nate Holthenrichs made the leap of faith of a career change to come to Miracle-Ear. "One of my best friends works for Miracle-Ear and he has always told me how he thought I would really enjoy this job. So I took the leap and I'm glad I did." Nate's favorite part of the job is easily the fact he gets to help people day in and day out and make an impact on people's everyday life! Nate also loves to travel any opportunity he gets.

PCC of the Month Dolly Drivon



Dolly Drivon is the Patient Care Coordinator at our Pleasant Hill location. Dolly has been with Miracle Ear since 2013. She retired from VISA and took two years off, then decided she missed people and wanted to find a position that she would love. Dolly found Miracle Ear and the position of a PCC puts her in touch with other seniors. She loves working with and getting to know them.

Peppermint Sugar Cookies

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time: 9 minutes

Servings: 20 Cookies

Sugar Cookies

- 2/3 cup regular shortening unflavored
- 2/3 cup unsalted butter room temperature
- 2 cups white sugar
- 1 large egg + 1 large egg yolk
- 1 tablespoon corn syrup
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1/4 - 1/2 teaspoon peppermint extract
- 3 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup peppermint crunch sprinkles

Peppermint Cream Cheese Frosting

- 1/4 cup (4 tablespoons) butter softened not melted
- 4 ounces cream cheese softened but not melted
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 teaspoon peppermint extract not mint extract
- 2 and up to 2 & 1/2 cups powdered sugar
- Peppermint crunch sprinkles to top



Instructions:

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.
2. Beat together the shortening, butter, and 1 and 1/2 cups white sugar until light and creamy. (Do not melt or soften your butter.)
3. Beat in the egg, egg yolk, corn syrup, and vanilla extract. Beat in the peppermint extract to taste. (I like less extract and more actual peppermint so I only add 1/4 tsp. Add 1/2 tsp for a stronger flavor)
4. Add in the flour, baking powder, salt and peppermint crunch. Mix until just combined.
5. Shape into thick, flat discs (see picture).
6. In a small bowl toss together the remaining 1/2 cup white sugar with the coarse sparkling sugar (or just use the white sugar). Roll the cookie balls in the sugar to coat.
7. Bake 2 inches apart on a parchment lined cookie sheet.
8. Bake 9-12 minutes.
9. *The key to soft sugar cookies is slightly under-baking the cookies, letting them cool most of the way, and then placing them in a bag (sealing the bag) when they are still a little warm. This keeps your cookies ultra soft!*
10. While the cookies are cooling, you can make the frosting:
11. Beat together the softened butter, softened cream cheese, vanilla, and peppermint extract.
12. Beat in the powdered sugar by slowly adding about 1/2 a cup at a time until a smooth frosting is formed. Add a little milk if needed to thin your frosting to desired consistency.
13. Again, feel free to increase the peppermint extract amount if desired in the frosting.
14. Frost the cookies and add peppermint crunch sprinkles to the top.
15. Store in an airtight container at room temperature.

<https://www.chelseasmessyapron.com/peppermint-sugar-cookies-free->

Riddle of the Month

Why was the cell phone wearing glasses?

Answer: _____

STAY TUNED! Answer will be in our January's
Newsletter

Answer to November's Riddle: Hopefully You

A Little Laughter

What did the Buffalo say to his son when
he left for college?

