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| **anvil** - (also called the incus) a tiny bone that passes vibrations from the hammer to the stirrup. **cochlea** - a spiral-shaped, fluid-filled inner ear structure; it is lined with cilia (tiny hairs) that move when vibrated and cause a nerve impulse to form. **eardrum** - (also called the tympanic membrane) a thin membrane that vibrates when sound waves reach it. **Eustachian tube** - a tube that connects the middle ear to the back of the nose; it equalizes the pressure between the middle ear and the air outside. When you "pop" your ears as you change altitude (going up a mountain or in an airplane), you are equalizing the air pressure in your middle ear. **hammer** - (also called the malleus) a tiny bone that passes vibrations from the eardrum to the anvil. | **nerves** - these carry electro-chemical signals from the inner ear (the cochlea) to the brain. **outer ear canal** - the tube through which sound travels to the eardrum. **pinna** - (also called the auricle) the visible part of the outer ear. It collects sound and directs it into the outer ear canal **semicircular canals** - three loops of fluid-filled tubes that are attached to the cochlea in the inner ear. They help us maintain our sense of balance. **stirrup** - (also called the stapes) a tiny, U-shaped bone that passes vibrations from the stirrup to the cochlea. This is the smallest bone in the human body (it is 0.25 to 0.33 cm long). |