

HEARING HEALTH CARE NEWS™



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Welcome to our latest edition of Hearing Health Care News™!

Summer continues to grip most of us across the country. August, one of my favorite months, is the second to be named after a Roman emperor, Augustus. Below is a short poem about the month that I hope you will enjoy:

"The birth of August is upon us, as the fair haired sun rises in the sky With songs of the cicada unwinding, the sand hill Cranes sail by The heat is hovering all around us, we feel heavy in its grip To break free from its bonds, from its clutches we must rip Shade gives little relief, to this melting, bending soul A river full of water, is not enough to quench this foe Only darkness breaks the curse, that the day could not hide Relief is but short...and that too must subside For August is just arriving, her journey's just begun It's only just beginning; her moment in the sun."

– Rhonda Baker

As we begin our venture towards the autumn months (and perhaps you can feel the pending transition on a crisp August evening), it is important that we continue to take the best care of ourselves and each other. Life is fragile and too short, no matter how long most of us will live. We are (to some extent) in control of how we live our lives; and we have significant input on determining our health. Even regular visits to your primary care physician can help keep most medical conditions at bay.

Every month, this newsletter highlights the importance of hearing health by stressing '**Hearing Care Is Health Care**'; and illustrating how hearing plays a vital role in your life, and in your overall health care. This month we will highlight the many medical conditions recognized during August, and how they relate to your Hearing Health Care needs. As always, the push is to educate you, your family, and loved ones on how your hearing health care is a vital piece of your overall health care, and how healthy hearing is necessary for a healthy you. This month our country recognizes many medical

conditions, including: **Psoriasis Awareness Month, National Immunization Awareness Month and Gastroparesis Awareness Month.** We will explore each of these, and how they relate to your most important sense - hearing!

Psoriasis Awareness Month: If you or a loved one have psoriasis, it is time to get your hearing checked and begin treatment as early as possible! Results from a study published in the *American Journal of Clinical Dermatology* suggested that people with psoriasis can be significantly more likely to develop hearing loss; specifically, the type referred to as sudden-onset sensorineural hearing loss. This hearing loss is unlike the slow progressive nature related to aging, rather this type of hearing loss occurs suddenly (as the name implies) and is most often detrimental resulting in permanent injury to the auditory nervous system. People with psoriasis are about 50 percent more likely to be diagnosed with sudden sensorineural hearing loss than people without psoriasis, according to the study. Additional reports have found that people with psoriatic arthritis may be more susceptible to hearing loss, too. According to those findings, almost a third of people with psoriatic arthritis had hearing loss, compared with less than 7 percent of people without psoriatic arthritis.

National Immunization Awareness Month: Many factors contribute to the development of hearing loss. Most people can list both noise exposure and aging as obvious culprits; however, less known but still as potent, the ability for infections to cause significant damage to the auditory system, including cognitive function, also is a culprit. Several diseases known to be dangerous to overall health also cause hearing loss. In fact, if you know somebody who tells you "I was born with normal hearing, but lost my hearing during childhood", chances are very high that person suffered from an infection that impacted his/her sense of hearing. A small sample of bacterial infections that can impact hearing, and available vaccines include:

- **Pneumonia.** More than just a lung infection, severe forms of this bacteria can cause permanent hearing

HEARING HEALTH CARE NEWS



loss and neuronal damage. Children under 5 and adults over 65 are recommended to be vaccinated against this bacterium.

- **Meningitis:** The bacterial form of this disease is associated with hearing loss in as much as 30% of people who contract the disease. There are several meningitis vaccines available in the US to protect against meningitis in children and young adults. Even adults who have not been vaccinated have options – we recommend you speak with your primary care physician.
- **Measles / Mumps / Rubella (MMR):** Serious ear infections and permanent hearing loss can impact children infected with these diseases. In addition, a pregnant mother who contracts rubella can pass the infection onto the fetus and render the child with profound hearing loss. The MMR vaccine is available, and recommended for children starting between 12-15 months, with a second dose at 4 to 6 years of age.

Gastroparesis Awareness Month: Gastroparesis is a disease of the muscles of the stomach or the nerves controlling the muscles that causes the muscles to stop working. Gastroparesis results in inadequate grinding of food by the stomach, and poor emptying of food from

the stomach into the intestine – which often leads to nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain. Gastroparesis can be caused either by diseases of the stomach's muscles or the nerves that control the muscles, but the most common disease that results in gastroparesis is **diabetes**.

Diabetes, affecting nearly 31 million people, significantly increases the risk of developing hearing loss and Dementia. Dementia and Diabetes starve your brain, and tangles and twists vital cells. Diabetes is not a normal part of aging. Diabetes affects your body's ability to produce or use insulin that will then remain in your blood stream. One of the most devastating effects of Diabetes is its impact on small blood vessels throughout the body which can cause damage to your major organs, including your intestines, heart, eyes, and ears.

Check back next month for more on our 'Hearing Health Care News™' series to learn about how hearing is the key to an active and healthy lifestyle as you age.

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