

Learn more about better hearing solutions at backmountainhearing.com

Email us at contact@backmountainhearing.com to subscribe to our e-newsletter.

Have you Heard?

Frequently our patients ask for updates on the Over The Counter (OTC) Hearing Aids and Medicare coverage of hearing aids. I'm here to provide an update on both of these:

OTC Hearing Aids: The OTC category, once finalized, will apply to air conduction hearing devices intended for adults (18+) with perceived mild to moderate hearing loss. Hearing aids for severe hearing loss or those younger than 18 would be prescription devices. Currently the FDA is working on determining the guidelines for these devices, one of them being the maximum output (volume) limit of OTC hearing aids. There seems to be a disagreement over maximum output levels for safety between lawmakers, FDA, ADA, AAA and other hearing care associations, as well as manufacturers such as Bose and Starkey. This appears to be the only thing

holding up the process. Once the FDA finalizes this guideline, it will take effect 60 days after the publication of the final rule. *Currently the regulation has not been published, however, the FDA indicated that they won't prosecute companies who improperly market hearing aid products.*

Current Status of Medicare covering Hearing Aids: An amended version of the Build Back Better Act included coverage of hearing aids for individuals with moderately-severe to profound hearing loss once every five years. According to numerous news articles, talks have stalled on the Build Back Better Act. Senator Joe Manchin reportedly said the bill is dead. It appears that the bill will be scrapped and may be split up into multiple bills. It is unknown if the Medicare coverage of hearing aids will be added to a future bill. *Unfortunately, Medicare coverage for hearing aids will likely not be happening in the near future.*

May is Better Speech & Hearing Month

Here at Back Mountain Hearing Care, our mission is to prevent hearing loss & improve the quality of life and empower those with hearing loss by providing education, transparent treatment options, and superior hearing healthcare. We are proud to be a local, family-owned full-service hearing care practice serving the Wilkes-Barre area. We celebrate better hearing all year round, but especially during May! If you or a loved one are wondering if you could be hearing better, give us a call and we'll do everything we can to help you.



Contact Us:

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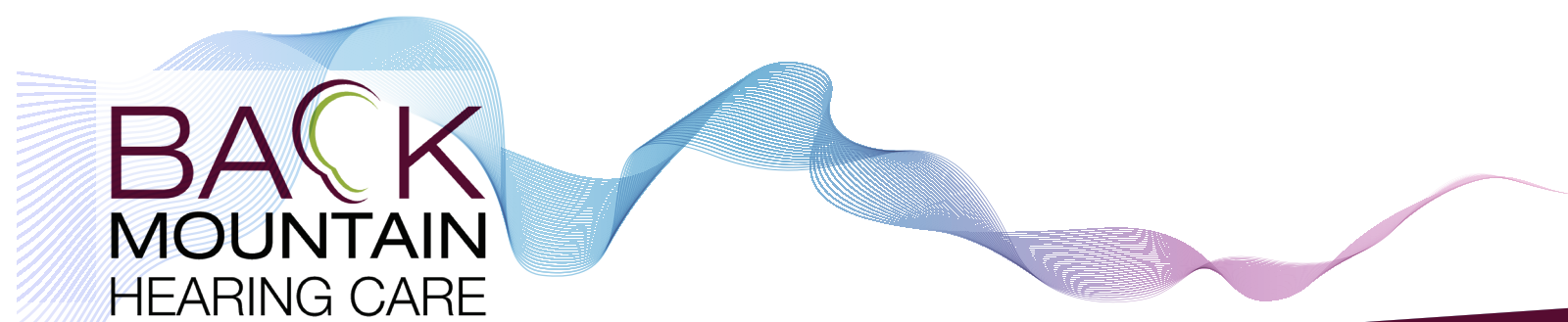
www.backmountainhearing.com



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Hear for You

TOTAL BODY HEALTH BEGINS WITH BETTER HEARING HEALTH

- Smoking**
Current smokers have a 70% higher risk of having hearing loss than nonsmokers.
- Eye Health**
Vision helps you identify where a sound is coming from.
- Tinnitus**
90% of people with tinnitus also have hearing loss.
- Diabetes**
Hearing loss is twice as common in people with diabetes compared to those without.
- Depression**
Uncorrected hearing loss gives rise to poorer quality of life.
- Ototoxicity**
There are more than 200 medications on the market today that are known to cause hearing loss.
- Isolation**
Adults 50 years and older with untreated hearing loss are more likely to report depression, anxiety, anger and frustration.
- Heart Health**
The inner ear is extremely sensitive to blood flow.
- Obesity**
Higher body mass index (BMI) and larger waist circumference are associated with increased risk of hearing loss in women.
- Hypertension**
There is a significant association between high blood pressure and hearing loss.
- Osteoporosis**
A study linked osteoporosis and hearing loss, theorizing that demineralization of the three middle ear bones may contribute to a conductive hearing impairment.
- Safety/Balance**
People with mild hearing loss (25db) are 300% more likely to have a history of falling. Every additional 10 decibels of hearing loss increases the chances of falling by 40%.
- Cognitive Decline**
Those with untreated hearing loss experience a 30-40% greater decline in thinking abilities.

Hearing Loss & Health

Caring for our hearing is an important step to ensuring complete and overall health for our minds and our bodies. [Learn more inside.](#)

Features

- Hearing and Whole Health
- Hearing and Vision
- The Cost of Untreated Hearing Loss

Hearing and Whole Health

Nothing is more important than your health, and while hearing may seem like a small or insignificant component, in reality our hearing is related to many aspects of our overall health. Caring for our hearing is an important step to ensuring complete and overall health for our minds and our bodies.

Did you know that bone health, blood pressure, body weight, heart health, vision, balance, energy level, emotions, and comprehension are all correlated with your hearing health? Some conditions can be caused by hearing health issues, and other conditions can themselves lead to hearing problems.

For example, smoking can increase the chances of hearing loss by 70%, while those with a higher than normal blood sugar level have a 30% higher risk of experiencing hearing difficulties. There are even some medications that can lead to hearing loss - over 200 in fact.

On the flip side, positive heart health, a healthy diet,



and strong vision can be preventative when it comes to hearing loss.

When your hearing is compromised, so is your overall safety, comprehension, and emotional well-being. Those with hearing loss are much more susceptible to balance issues or falls.

Difficulty with hearing can cause confusion and has been correlated with increased or accelerated dementia. Often, hearing struggles result in feelings of isolation or depression, as social interactions become increasingly challenging.

Taking care of our hearing is a key step to ensuring overall health. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle is one positive

way to protect your hearing. Similarly, modern hearing technology can help to prevent or correct numerous hearing health issues that we experience. Since hearing issues can be connected with other health issues, it is important to not ignore the symptoms. Rather, have your hearing evaluated and start the process towards optimal health!

The Cost of Untreated Hearing Loss

Living a healthy lifestyle can sometimes feel costly as you compare things like organic foods to conventional or processed ones. However, when it comes to our health, we need to think long-term. A less expensive and less healthy lifestyle now may result in greater health costs in the future. This is true for hearing health as well.

On average, people with hearing loss wait approximately seven years before addressing their hearing needs. Can you imagine waiting that long to address any other chronic health issue? It would be unhealthy and potentially life-threatening.

According to studies published by *Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health*, those who do not treat their hearing loss end up spending close to 50% more on health care costs and hospital stays than those without hearing loss.* The deductibles and associated real costs can far surpass the costs of a hearing solution today.

The ability to communicate effectively and correctly with healthcare providers concerning any health issue

is vital to your overall health and to prevent recurring issues or readmittance to hospitals (another common side effect of untreated hearing loss). Clear hearing means clear communication.

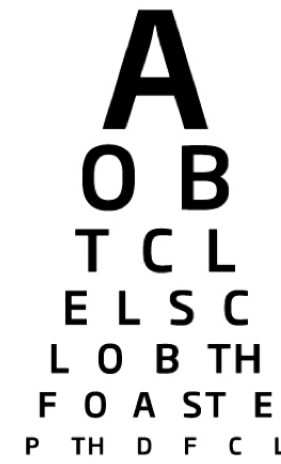
Taking steps today to address your hearing needs could vastly decrease additional health issues, side effects, and health costs throughout the years to come. Take a long view of your hearing health and get your hearing tested today to improve your quality of life now and prevent problems tomorrow.

*<https://www.jhsph.edu/news/news-releases/2018/patients-with-untreated-hearing-loss-incur-higher-health-care-costs-over-time.html>



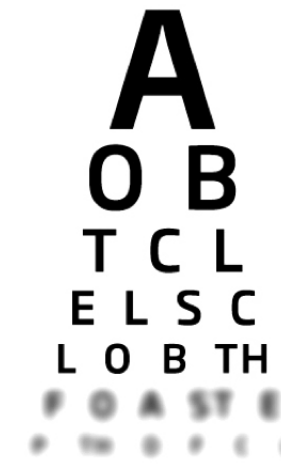
Hearing and Vision

The difference between hearing loss and vision loss



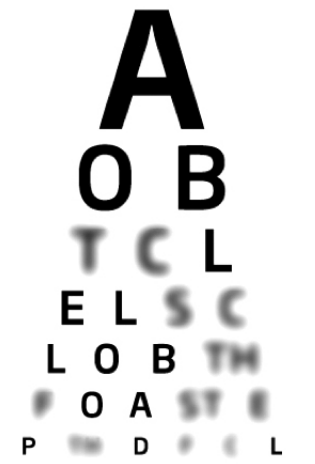
Treating hearing loss early has many benefits.

Normal Hearing



Treating hearing loss early has many benefits.

Visual impairment



Treating hearing loss early has many benefits.

Hearing impairment

As you can see, visual impairment tends to manifest itself in a linear way. For example, if you are near sighted, smaller items are harder to see at a distance. However, hearing loss is much more complex and unpredictable since our brains are so heavily involved in processing and decoding sound.

When it comes to our five senses, many of us would consider our vision and hearing to be the most vital. Much of our quality of life is impacted by our ability to see and hear. However, these two senses are not equal in how their deficiencies impact us. While the thought of vision problems may seem scarier, for many vision issues, solutions are more straightforward than those required for hearing loss.

Obtaining glasses, using contacts, and even Laser repair are now commonplace corrections that can significantly improve vision. With vision, the measurement of your deficiency and eye shape can often give an eye doctor the exact specifications he needs to correct the loss. Hearing, however, is a much more complex system and therefore requires more customization to deliver great results.

One key difference between hearing and vision loss is that generally hearing can only be improved rather than completely restored. The hair cells of the inner ear cannot be regenerated and, therefore, once damaged, are unable to be restored. This is where hearing aids come in and assist in amplifying sound— and much more.

Another complexity is that hearing aids must work

together with your brain to determine which sounds you are trying to hear. The longer you experience hearing loss without the help of a hearing device, the more out of practice your brain becomes at deciphering sounds, which increases your hearing difficulty. This is why early detection is key with hearing loss. The sooner you begin using hearing aids, the better your brain will be at deciphering sounds.

With modern hearing devices, there are many factors and modern features to consider. Because today's devices are not just amplifiers and instead utilize complex signal processing algorithms that are the product of hundreds of engineering years of study by each manufacturer, it may be necessary to try different hearing aids to determine which model is best for you.

The Hearing Aid Test Drive™ was developed to let you do just that - experience the benefits of various devices in your daily life before making such important decisions about treatment for your hearing loss.

With the Test Drive, you're in the driver's seat and taking an active role in your hearing health and choosing the best solution for you. We're just here to guide you through the process with our professional expertise.