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## Introducing Kaitlin Mausteller

We are pleased to announce that Dr. Kaitlin Mausteller, Au.D., CCC-A has joined the Back Mountain Hearing Care team! Dr. Mausteller earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Communication Sciences and Disorders at The Pennsylvania State University in 2016 and then continued on to receive her Doctorate of Audiology from Bloomsburg University in 2021. She holds her Certificate of Clinical Competence in Audiology from the American Speech-Language and Hearing Association and is state licensed to practice Audiology in Pennsylvania. Previously Dr. Mausteller worked at an ENT practice in State College, Pennsylvania where she specialized in pediatric through geriatric diagnostic testing. Through her schooling Dr. Mausteller gained experience in a variety of settings including university clinic, private practice and ENT offices.

Dr. Mausteller's interests include diagnostics and hearing aids across the lifespan. She loves having the opportunity to create a positive impact on the lives of her patients through the gift of communication and better hearing. Outside of work Dr. Mausteller enjoys hunting for antiques, and spending time with her family and yellow lab, Autumn.



## Contact Us:

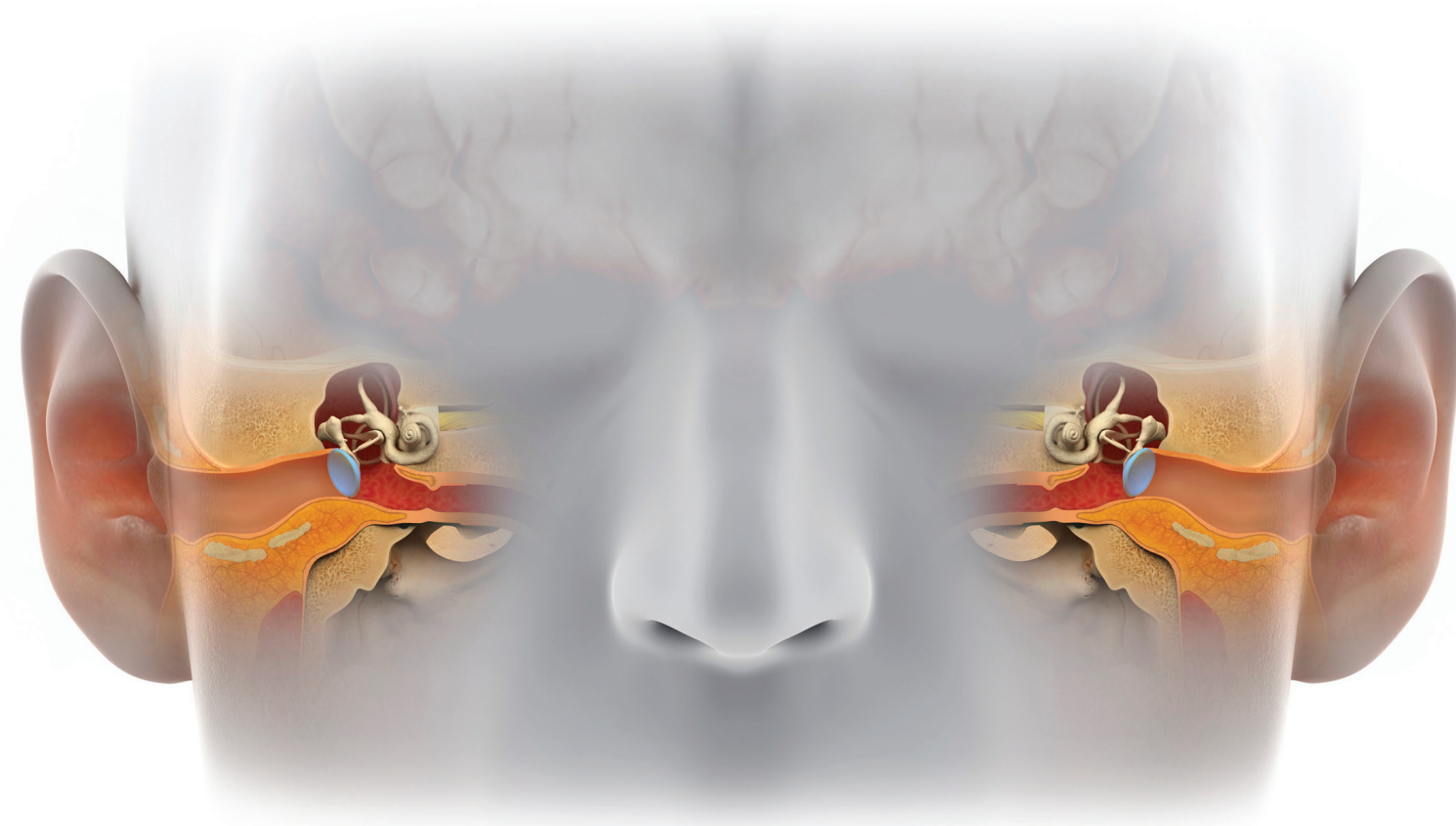
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Kayla Bloom, Au.D.



Hearing goes beyond just your ears. Your brain, memory, and even your social life can be impacted by your hearing. That's why good hearing is key to living your life to its fullest. Learn more inside.

## Features

- The Link Between Hearing and Brain Function
- How to Delay and Even Prevent Cognitive Decline
- Office Update
- Introducing Kaitlin Mausteller



# The Link Between Hearing and Brain Function

Hearing loss is often viewed as a stand-alone medical issue. However, there are additional health concerns associated with hearing loss that shouldn't be ignored. Studies are beginning to show that **memory and brain function can both be negatively impacted as a result of hearing loss.**

When we think of hearing, our first thought is generally our ears, but in reality, it is the brain that hears. Understanding the brain's role in quality hearing is key to understanding hearing loss.

Oftentimes, the additional effort dedicated to listening when there is a decrease in hearing ability can cause stress, which in turn may result in decreased memory resources. In essence, one's brain becomes so taxed from the mere effort of listening, that there is no energy left to remember the information that was taken in.

Here is the core issue: we actually hear with our brain, and not our ears. Our brain's ability to analyze information heard is impacted by the effort the brain must put forth in order to first decode the actual words heard.

The link between hearing and brain function also suggests connections between hearing loss and dementia. According to multiple



John Hopkins studies<sup>1</sup>, the use of properly fitted hearing aids can help in preventing dementia. In fact, hearing loss can have a greater impact on potential dementia than other health conditions or even genetic diseases.

Additionally, studies<sup>2</sup> have shown that those who use effective hearing aids are more socially engaged and possess a more positive outlook on life. The relationships one engages in once hearing loss is treated can be yet another preventative measure when it comes to cognitive abilities, memory, and dementia. A recent study by the Journal of the

American Geriatric Society<sup>3</sup> shows that there is a greater chance of cognitive decline for those with hearing difficulties who do not use hearing aids. This is largely due to the natural tendency to withdraw from social activities when listening becomes difficult.

One of the best things you can do to preserve your memory and cognitive abilities is to get a hearing test. Be proactive about your hearing. Many hearing evaluations are covered by Medicare or insurance and can help identify any hearing difficulties you may be experiencing.

# Help Delay and Even Prevent Cognitive Decline

In order to help delay and even prevent cognitive decline, it is important to understand more about your own hearing and determine if interventions are necessary. In fact, a study\* conducted at Columbia University Medical Center (CUMC) found that older adults whose evaluation revealed the need for hearing aids performed significantly better on cognitive tests than those who needed, but did not use, a hearing aid.

\*<http://newsroom.cumc.columbia.edu/blog/2016/04/25/hearing-aid-use-associated-improved-cognitive-function-hearing-impaired-elderly/>

## What To Do

- **Have your hearing evaluated regularly after the age of 50.** The sooner you address the issue, the less likely you are to suffer cognitive disadvantages. Auditory processing can become more difficult with age and/or untreated hearing loss. It is important to identify hearing problems early on in order to keep the brain pathways strong.
- **Protect your ears.** Even if you don't need hearing aids, there are many ways to keep your ears protected from loud sounds.
- **Lead a healthy lifestyle.** Be wise about your overall health. According to Weill Cornell Medical School, it is important to prevent low blood flow, which can harm your inner ear. Exercising, eating well, getting a massage, checking the side effects of your medications, and ceasing to smoke are all steps you can take that can increase health and well being.



## Office Update

I opened Back Mountain Hearing Care in October 2018 and started out only being open a few days a week. On the other days, I worked as an independent contractor, traveling to nursing homes all over the state to provide audiology services. Over the last year, the practice has grown to 5 days a week and serving two local nursing homes. For the first 3 years, I wore all the hats... Audiologist, receptionist, administration, maintenance, etc. In June 2021, Jackie Morgan joined the team as our receptionist/administrative assistant. Now as we enter into 2022, we are adding a second Audiologist, Dr. Kaitlin Mausteller!

We couldn't have grown this much over these past 3 years without our amazing patients! So many of our patients have referred other family and friends to us, which is always the greatest compliment, and the BEST form of marketing. Your support is greatly appreciated!!

-Dr. Kayla Bloom



<sup>1</sup> "Hearing Loss Linked to Accelerated Brain Tissue Loss - 01/22/2014." Johns Hopkins Medicine Health Library, John Hopkins Medicine, 22 Jan. 2014, [www.hopkinsmedicine.org/news/media/releases/hearing\\_loss\\_linked\\_to\\_accelerated\\_brain\\_tissue\\_loss\\_](http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/news/media/releases/hearing_loss_linked_to_accelerated_brain_tissue_loss_).

<sup>2</sup> "The National Council on the Aging." Seniors Research Group, May 1999, pp. 1-12.

<sup>3</sup> Amieva, Hélène, et al. "Self-Reported Hearing Loss, Hearing Aids, and Cognitive Decline in Elderly Adults: A 25-Year Study." Journal of the American Geriatrics Society, vol. 63, no. 10, 2015, pp. 2099-2104., doi:10.1111/jgs.13649

• [https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/news/media/releases/hearing\\_loss\\_linked\\_to\\_accelerated\\_brain\\_tissue\\_loss\\_](https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/news/media/releases/hearing_loss_linked_to_accelerated_brain_tissue_loss_)  
• <https://www.ncoa.org/wp-content/uploads/NCOA-Study-1999.pdf>