

FRANCIS SLABBER, JANET STEER & ASSOCIATES

PROFESSIONAL CARE FOR ALL YOUR HEARING PROBLEMS

THE HEARING CLINIC

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Hearing aids stimulate brain activity

Most often, hearing loss sneaks up on you. Suddenly one day, you notice that you no longer hear your alarm clock or birds singing. It takes most people an average of 7 years to do something about their hearing loss, generally because they're waiting for the problem to go away by itself, but it rarely does.

Although the biggest concern with hearing loss is that one loses confidence, quality of life and generally misses out on conversation, it also affects the brain's ability to remember common, everyday sounds because the hearing channels are no longer effectively used. When the hearing nerves lose their function and no longer channel sound signals to the brain, the brain "forgets" the sound over time and becomes unable to understand them.

The brain centre for hearing stores sounds and noises for up to three years following the onset of a hearing loss. But after about seven years the memory becomes weaker and sounds unrecognisable.

Therefore, it is important to have your hearing tested and hearing aids fitted when you find out that you are losing some of your hearing. Once you receive a hearing aid - and wear it - the hearing processing resumes supplying signals to the brain, and in time it "remembers" and restores the auditory memories that might have been lost. However, if the fitting of a hearing aid is delayed, not even a hearing aid will be able to transform the incoming sound signals into understandable information. This means that the brain no longer recognises ordinary everyday sounds and noises, such as the hum of a fridge or traffic. The brain must learn to hear all over again, and there is just too much to learn if the brain is no longer a teenager.

Also remember that many of the sounds that are introduced when you first receive a hearing aid might not have been around yet when you first started losing your hearing. Computers are in all our homes, TV's are in every room, fridges can make their own ice, the amount of traffic on the roads has doubled and kids are not just seen but very much heard as well! Have patience with you ears, your brain and your hearing aid - they have a lot to deal with!

SOME SAD & SOME HAPPY NEWS

Sadly and very unexpectedly, Philippa Round, who has been with us for more than three years, has found greener pastures in the pharmaceutical business.

We are very sad to see her go, but we wish her well and lots of success as a medical rep.

The happy news is that we have managed to find a worthy replacement. Nadine Jooste has been a close friend of the practice for many years and is joining us from 1 September. She will be taking over all of Philippa's duties and clients. Nadine qualified with Francis at Pretoria University and has had extensive experience in the field of Diagnostic Audiology, both locally and abroad. She will be a great asset to The Hearing Clinic team and we look forward to introducing her to you.

Recognize your Hearing Aid?

BTE - Behind-the-Ear
ITC - In-the-Canal
CIC - Completely-in-Canal
CID - Completely-in-Drawer

With mild to moderate hearing loss, it is a huge temptation not to wear the aid.

When it still seems hard to believe that you might have a loss of hearing, it's even harder to believe that you need to aid it, but truth is, the sooner you start, the easier it is to get used to. The greater the hearing problem, the more one is obliged to persevere in order to stay in touch with friends and family. If you have a CID model, isn't it time you allowed us to try to help overcome some of the difficulties you experience?

On a related issue - many simply don't have the wherewithal to acquire a good hearing aid.

For them the teaching hospitals or the Cape Town and District Association for the Deaf are the only alternatives. These options are both tedious and time consuming and available only to those whose medical aid benefit is less than R3000. The range of aids on state tender is fairly basic as the software, equipment and expertise to fit the higher-end products is not within their budgets.

The Lions Club has a project whereby broken, abandoned and unused hearing aids are collected for distribution to GSH and Red Cross. A bit like the SPCA of hearing aids! We pass on all we can as even pirated parts are invaluable in keeping somebody's instrument up and running.

However, many needy people come our way too and we are often able to fit them with instruments donated to us. Thank you to all of those who have helped. We charge for the service and repair of these instruments as well as the normal consultation and testing fees, but there is no cost for the aid - it's simply passed on on behalf of the donor. Depending on the expense of the repair/reshell, one is looking at a cost of R500 to R2000 and there would be no guarantee on the instrument, but a little goes a long way in aiding someone's quality of life.



Raffles, Orchids and Singapore Slings

Francis has just been off to Singapore for some training on a new top-end product from Siemens and on the I-Scan - that is "I" as in "aye", not as in i-Omo, i-soccer or i-leven. This piece of high-tech magic will enable us to e-mail scans of ear impressions for hearing aids directly to workshops, be they in Singapore, Joburg or Timbuktu. By limiting human error, it promises more accurate and comfortable In-the-Ear Instruments. We have taken delivery of the new equipment and will begin scanning immediately. We are honoured to be only one of eight practices country wide who have been offered this opportunity to be a part of what is happening in the rest of the world - all very exciting.

And in case you are still struggling to find us, cut out our details to stick on the fridge:

FRANCIS SLABBER, JANET STEER & NADINE JOOSTE

**AUDIOLOGISTS &
HEARING AID ACOUSTICIAN**

WYNBERG: The Hearing Clinic 35 Waterloo Rd 021- 797 7948

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Audiologist**

&

**Janet Steer
Acoustician**

&

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