

M.D. NEWS

Special Feature

The Hearing Clinic, Inc.



High-Tech Relief for Hearing Loss, Dizziness and Tinnitus

By Judi Wallace

It was the grandmother's last straw. When hearing loss prevented Mary, a 60-something grandmother, from hearing her granddaughter cry, she realized she needed help with her hearing. After Tami Ike, Au.D. at The Hearing Clinic fit Mary with the appropriate hearing aids, the family was finally comfortable with her caring for her granddaughter.

Such life-enhancing outcomes are everyday occurrences at The Hearing Clinic. The doctors of audiology at The Hearing Clinic treat patients of all ages across the Triad in three well-equipped offices. While often associated with adults over 65,

Phonak microSavia Art Digital Hearing Aid. Technology has vastly improved over the large analog models of the past.



hearing loss can strike at any age. In fact, adults from 55 to 64 comprise the largest segment of the 31.5 million Americans with hearing problems. The good news: 90% of hearing problems can be treated at The Hearing Clinic. "We help our patients with hearing difficulties, enhancing their quality of life. There is no telling how many marriages and jobs we have saved following proper diagnosis and treatment of hearing problems," explains Tami Ike, Au.D., President of The Hearing Clinic.

PHYSICIANS REFER PATIENTS

Although patients come directly to The Hearing Clinic offices for evaluation and treatment, many patients are referred by physicians. Referrals come from general practitioners, specialists in internal medicine and neurologists. Otolaryngologists (ENTs) refer patients with vestibular problems, and chiropractors treating patients for trauma refer patients for assessment.

Many patients are often adept at covering up their hearing loss, especially in face-to-face situations where they can read lips, **including in their physicians' offices.** So, unless a patient's family complains or the physician screens his/her patient, the hearing loss can go undiagnosed for a long time. To facilitate early detection, The Hearing Clinic provides physicians with free hearing screening devices. Adults 55 and older should be screened for hearing loss as part of their periodic physical examinations.

The Hearing Clinic provides hearing screening devices free of charge to physicians.



Tami Ike, Au.D. runs a battery of tests to ensure that this hearing aid is the right choice for her patient.

TECHNOLOGY OFFERS EFFECTIVE SOLUTIONS

The really good news is that today's hearing aids are dramatically better than those worn by our grandparents. Digital technology provides substantial and continuing improvement, with new features and benefits becoming available at an ever-faster pace. Because all but the most basic hearing aids are programmed with computers, the patient's experience with the hearing aids dictates the appropriate reprogramming, providing the patient with a product lifecycle of continuous improvement.

Older hearing aids amplified all sounds identically, generating complaints about not distinguishing conversation from background noise. New digital circuits provide up to 20 bands of frequency-specific amplification, best matching the hearing loss at each frequency. Depending on the incoming volume, at specific frequencies or pitch, the hearing aids can automatically

The most common cause of dizziness is benign paroxysmal positional vertigo, and is easily treated.

Dr. J. Keith Miller on The Hearing Clinic

Dr. J. Keith Miller, a neurologist with Johnson Neurological Clinic in High Point, refers patients to The Hearing Clinic. "Professionally, I have enjoyed referring patients for 18 years. The response from my patients has been wonderful. Our patients are treated professionally and compassionately and their problems are thoroughly addressed. The quality of your ENG testing has been superior and clinically relevant.

"Personally, The Hearing Clinic has improved the quality of life for my family as we have dealt with the challenges of hearing loss. The return visits were extremely helpful in making sure the fit of the hearing aid was right and all systems were working properly. The caring environment is evident as with the simplest of considerations — free batteries."

adjust each sound for amplification (pass through or attenuate) meeting situation-specific loudness requirements. Dr. Ike says "Hearing aid technology has vastly improved in just the last four years, allowing us to address our patients' needs more precisely than ever before."

Today many new digital hearing aids also have a data logging feature. This technology continuously monitors and records data from the user's environment and his/her manual and automatic adjustments. It enables the audiologist to download into the computer and adjust amplification parameters, best matching the patient's needs. The result is an even wider range of solutions for matching the right product with the patient's auditory requirements, including affordability.

AUDIOLOGISTS EVALUATE DIZZINESS AND BALANCE

Philip C. Griffin, Au.D. of The Hearing Clinic also evaluates dizziness and balance problems. These symptoms often arise from a dysfunction in the vestibular part of the inner ear. A thorough assessment can reveal signs of any number of inner ear problems. Audiologists are a part of a multidisciplinary team that assist in the evaluation of dizziness and offer non-medical options for this problem. Symptoms may include:

- Imbalance
- Falling
- Vertigo or spinning sensation
- Lightheadedness
- Visual disturbances

The comprehensive battery of tests at The Hearing Clinic is unique in that it was designed to include several studies that screen for neurological, vascular and cervical causes of dizziness. According to Philip C. Griffin, Au.D., "We search for any and all clues to help referring physicians figure out their patient's problem. We look at the big picture."

The most common type of dizziness comes from benign paroxysmal positional vertigo (BPPV). Fortunately, this is easily treated at The Hearing Clinic with a series of head and body positioning maneuvers that relocate the inner ear debris which are causing the problem. Dr. Griffin adds, "It's more prevalent in the elderly, but we regularly see it in patients in their 40s and 50s."

Imbalance leading to injurious falls is a major problem for seniors. Since inner ear problems may be to blame for imbalance, this can be effectively evaluated by audiologists. Depending on the findings, The Hearing Clinic will recommend a treatment

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Tami Ike, Au.D. reviews a vestibular evaluation with John Lalonde, M.D. Dr. Lalonde referred this patient following complaints of dizziness and balance problems.



Philip Griffin, Au.D. uses infrared goggles to help assess inner ear function.

strategy to keep the patient safe and reduce the risk of dangerous falls.

NEUROMONICS TINNITUS TREATMENT PROGRAM

Tinnitus is another condition the audiologists at The Hearing Clinic evaluate and treat. Commonly known as “ringing in the ears,” these noises have been described as ringing, buzzing, whistling, crickets, etc. Dr. Tami Ike reports that tinnitus, “affects approximately 20% of the U.S. population

with 1-2% of these individuals being severely affected.”

Dr. Ike is a certified provider for the Neuromonics Tinnitus Treatment program. Neuromonics, the leader in the latest advancement in tinnitus management, has developed an FDA-approved medical device, which has been proven and validated over the last 14 years treating thousands of tinnitus sufferers worldwide. “Once any possible medical condition, ear-related disease or medication is ruled out as a cause [for tinnitus] we can proceed with the treatment,” states Dr. Ike. Neuromonic’s clinical research shows that the treatment is successful in over 90% of patients.

The Hearing Clinic

Services

- Hearing evaluation
- Hearing aid sales and service
- Vestibular/dizziness evaluation
- Tinnitus evaluation and treatment
- Custom earplugs for noise, swimming, music, and communications
- Most major insurance accepted and filed, including Medicare
- VISA, MasterCard and Discover welcome

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THE HEARING CLINIC CAN HELP

For all hearing and inner ear-related disorders, ongoing improvements in technology continually produce new solutions for long-suffering patients. The audiology specialists at The Hearing Clinic remain focused on these technological developments, while caring for patients and communicating with referring physicians. As Dr. Ike summarizes, “At The Hearing Clinic, everything we do is focused on the patient and hearing health care. This is our only purpose. We welcome our patients and work hard to meet their needs.” ■