



AUDITORY SYSTEM DEPRIVATION AND ITS LONG-TERM EFFECTS



Mt. Harrison Audiology

and Hearing Aids LLC

www.MtHarrisonAudiology.com

Research has shown that when the brain doesn't receive stimulus, it re-organizes itself and puts the patient at risk for cognitive decline. Our goal at Mt. Harrison Audiology and Hearing Aids is to keep the auditory pathways open and provide needed stimulation to the brain.

The Hearing Process

Hearing only starts with your ears. It is the auditory system, which is composed of the outer ear, the middle ear, the inner ear and the auditory neurological pathway, that allows the process of hearing to occur. That process begins when sound waves enter the outer ear and are channeled through the other complex parts of the ear, the nervous system and into the brain. The physical characteristics of the original sound are preserved as various types of energy that the brain recognizes and identifies as a particular sound.

So, in actuality, you hear with your brain!

Auditory Health

When it comes to maintaining your auditory system, you lose it if you don't use it. Just as the muscles in your body become sore when you exercise after a period of doing nothing, your auditory system will have a hard time getting back into shape should you suddenly decide to wear hearing devices, especially if you have gone a long time without treating your hearing loss. Your brain will lose some of its ability to process information due to lack of stimulation and, as a result, it will be more difficult to recognize sounds – even with hearing devices.

To minimize the impact of auditory deprivation, you should address the hearing loss sooner, once diagnosed, rather than when the condition gets worse. Providing solutions and positive outcomes for patients with advanced/longstanding hearing loss can be done but with greater challenges as the condition of the neurological system is weak. Early intervention results in better outcomes.

Next Steps

We recommend you receive a baseline hearing test beginning at the age of 40. During this test, we can determine the lowest volume level you can hear at various frequencies or pitches. We can then reference this at subsequent testing and monitor changes.

Once your hearing threshold is identified, we encourage you to have periodic hearing tests (every two or three years) to help prevent and/or identify hearing loss earlier than you otherwise might. If you are a hunter, musician or woodworker, or are frequently and consistently exposed to loud noise, an annual hearing test is recommended. It is only through preventative care that we can help you prevent further damage to your hearing system.

Source: Peelle, J., et al. (2011). Hearing loss in older adults affects neural systems supporting speech comprehension. JNeurosci, 31(35), 12638-43.

CONSUMER NOTICES

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