

CY-FAIR HEARING NEWS

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WELCOME TO CY-FAIR HEARING!

Our mission is to provide our patients with personalized, high-quality hearing healthcare. We have strived to create a practice that is centered on each patients' individual needs. Our focus is on making sure that our patients have access to the best quality of care and latest technology for help with their hearing impairment.



National Audiology Awareness Month/National Protect Your Hearing Month

Many people take their hearing for granted, but hearing loss is a common condition affecting 36 million Americans to some degree. Its prevalence increases as we age, but there are steps you can take to prevent irreversible damage to your ears. Understanding the important role an audiologist plays in your hearing health, and taking precautions to protect your hearing now, can pay off down the road. To help achieve these goals, October has been deemed National Audiology Awareness Month and National Protect Your Hearing Month.

Hearing loss is an increasing health concern in the U.S., but is often preventable. While some degree of age-related hearing loss (known as presbycusis) is common and unavoidable, more than half of those diagnosed with hearing loss are under the age of 65. Hearing loss can be caused by a number of factors besides aging, including noise exposure, ear infections, trauma, viruses and diseases and reactions to medications.

Many people don't even realize there is a problem as symptoms tend to come on gradually, and others choose to ignore it and avoid seeking treatment by a specialist. Initial signs of hearing loss include having trouble following conversations, especially in noisy environments; difficulty understanding people unless looking at them while they speak; feeling that others mumble or slur their speech and noticing pain or a ringing in the ears. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, you should consult an audiologist as soon as possible.

An audiologist is a healthcare professional who evaluates diagnoses and treats hearing loss and balance disorders in adults and children.

These clinically licensed physicians prescribe, fit and dispense hearing aids and assistive listening devices, including cochlear implants. In addition, they treat patients with tinnitus and other central processing disorders and provide hearing rehabilitation services. Regular hearing screenings performed by a licensed audiologist are invaluable in pinpointing problems early on.

Excessive noise exposure is a leading cause of hearing loss, but one that is easily preventable if you follow a few simple guidelines designed to protect your hearing. When noise levels at your job site exceed safe levels, be sure to wear safety equipment (earplugs or earmuffs) that meets state and federal regulations for noise protection. Use earplugs when you're participating in loud recreational activities, such as sporting events and rock concerts as well. If you're a hunter, swimmer or surfer, look for earplugs designed specifically for those activities.

Limit your exposure to noisy activities at home, and keep the volume down when watching TV, listening to the radio, or using a personal listening device such as a MP3 player. Refrain from inserting cotton swabs and other objects into your ears and avoid smoking; studies show tobacco use raises the risk of hearing loss over time.

Audiologist or Hearing Instrument Specialist? What's the Difference?

The journey to better hearing begins when you choose a hearing professional that you can trust. But often, you may be unsure where to turn. Understanding the difference between an Audiologist and a Hearing Instrument Specialist will help you make that crucial decision.

An Audiologist is a licensed and certified professional who has earned a Master's Degree (M.S.) or Doctoral Degree (Au.D/Ph.D) in the field of Audiology. Typically, this level of advanced education requires six to eight years of study to complete. They are certified both nationally and at the state level and licensed to practice by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA). Audiologists are trained to diagnose and treat hearing and balance disorders, perform comprehensive hearing evaluations, fit hearing devices and assistive listening devices, and counsel patients and their families on communication strategies.

By contrast, Hearing Instrument Specialists are required to have only completed high school or, in some states, possess a two-year degree. In addition, they must pass a written and practical exam to become licensed by the state in which they practice. They may also take a national exam and become Board Certified Hearing Instrument Specialists through the National Hearing Instrument Society. They are trained solely in the interpretation of hearing assessment to fit hearing aids, hearing device electronics and specifications, and programming hearing aids.

Choosing an Audiologist over a Hearing Instrument Specialist, means you are working with a specialist who holds an advanced degree, who is an expert in all aspects of hearing healthcare including the fitting of hearing devices, creation of individualized treatment plans, and hearing rehabilitation. Audiologists provide comprehensive care, and an advanced level of support Hearing Instrument Specialists are unable to match.

13611 Skinner Road, Suite 240

Cypress, TX 77429

Phone- 281-256-8212

Website: www.cyfairhearing.com

Email: office@cyfairhearing.com