

May 2017 Issue

Tune In: Tips for Better Hearing

About 20 percent of adult Americans experience some degree of hearing loss, and one in three people over age 65 has hearing loss, according to the Hearing Loss Association of America. [Brian Cusick MD](#), an ENT with Mason Group Health, says the most common causes of hearing loss in adults are aging and noise.



Dr. Cusick advises, "Seek evaluation when you feel you are not picking up sounds and conversations around you – or if family members are recommending you get your hearing checked." In addition, Dr. Cusick notes that sudden loss of hearing may indicate an inner ear infection, which should be treated as early as possible. He also suggests taking the following steps to help prevent hearing loss.

Four Ways to Protect Your Hearing:

1. Wear ear plugs when you are exposed to loud noises – machinery, a loud concert, or lawn mower.
2. Use a moderate volume for devices you put in your ears.
3. Do not use Q-tips (cotton swabs) in your ears, which can cause wax buildup and lessen hearing.
4. Get a hearing test sooner rather than later, especially if the hearing loss is just in one ear.
Your chances of correcting hearing loss increase with early intervention.



Hearing-Loss Prevention on the Job*

Occupational hearing loss is defined as noise-induced hearing loss due to overexposure in the workplace and is considered one of the most common occupational illnesses in the United States according to the Better Hearing Institute. Risk for hearing loss related due to hazardous noise exposure is especially high among those working in factories, transportation, the military, construction as well as among those serving as firefighters, police officers, and musicians.

To help protect your hearing on the job, take these steps whenever possible:

- **Learn** about your employer's hearing conservation program if you work at an at-risk occupation. These programs strive to prevent hearing loss and equip workers with hearing protection devices.
- **Wear** hearing protection such as earplugs consistently when using or near loud equipment at work.
- **Limit** exposure to hazardous noise, both on the job and at home.
- **See** a hearing health professional routinely for hearing testing.

Swimmer's Ear: What You Need to Know

Swimmer's ear, referred to as external otitis, can be one of summer's most annoying infections. It differs from other ear infections such as the kind that accompany a cold or sinus infection, which affect a deeper part of the ear canal.

Swimming Is the Primary, but Not the Only, Cause of Swimmer's Ear

"It's called swimmer's ear because [swimming] is one of the most common causes," John Narre II MD, an Ear, Nose, Throat doctor at Group Health, explains. "It can be caused by a lot of other things besides swimming, such as showering, rain water and even heavy sweating and high humidity."

The ear canal is dark and warm. When you add moisture to the mix, it's the perfect breeding ground for bacteria growth. However, while swimmer's ear is usually caused by bacteria, it also can be caused by a fungus – the same fungus that causes athlete's foot – leading to "an extremely painful ear," he adds.

Do I Need to See My Doctor about Swimmer's Ear?

If you notice symptoms of swimmer's ear, including pain when you push or pull on the ear, or redness and swelling, schedule an appointment with your doctor. While treating it is often as simple as using ear drops containing antibiotics for 10 to 14 days, in rare cases, it can be fatal.

You can't always tell how severe it is from the symptoms and it can cause infection around the ear called cellulitis, a deep tissue infection. "People with diabetes or some condition that affects their immune system can get an even more severe form of this that can be life-threatening," Dr. Narre says.

If you tend to get swimmer's ear often, Dr. Narre says you could **take these precautions**:

- **Remove** water from your ear, when necessary, with a tissue or by shaking your head sideways.
- **Use** over-the-counter drops, which are usually a combination of alcohol and vinegar and have a drying effect.



Recipe: Fruit Pizza

Sneak more variety into your diet with this simple – and not to mention, mouth-watering – recipe for fruit pizza.

Prep time: 25 minutes

Ingredients (makes 2 servings):

- One roll of prepared sugar cookie dough
- One 8-ounce package of cream cheese (use light cream cheese if desired)
- Sliced seasonal fruit of your choice
- 1 teaspoon of vanilla
- ¼ cup of sugar

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. Spray a pizza pan with non-stick cooking spray.
3. Press the sugar cookie dough in the pizza pan to the edges.
4. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes (until the cookie crust is golden brown).
5. Allow to cool completely (about 30 minutes).
6. Mix softened cream cheese with vanilla and sugar, and spread on the cooled cookie crust.
7. Arrange sliced fruit on the cream cheese mixture.
8. Refrigerate for two hours.
9. Slice with a pizza cutter and enjoy.

