

# HEARING SOLUTIONS SIG

## Hearing Tips for the Holidays

# Handling Hearing Loss Over The Holidays

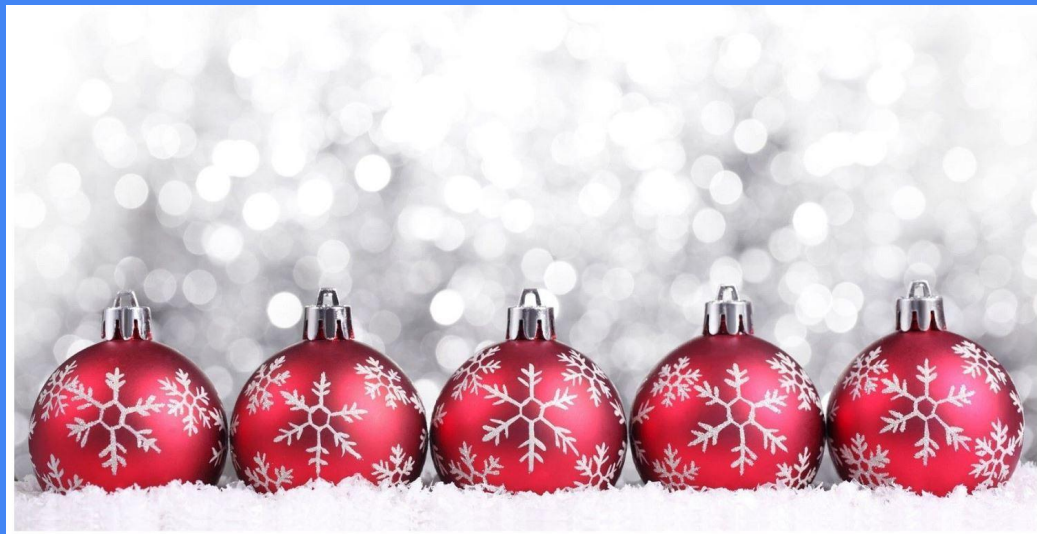
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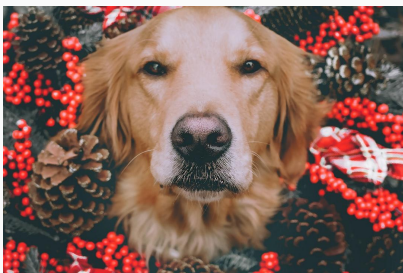


# Make a (packing) list and check it twice!

- You may have plans to travel over the next few weeks, if you are travelling **don't forget** to bring all of your hearing aids supplies with you to ensure a stress free trip.
- **Here are a few items to make sure you've got with you:**
  - Charger
  - Hearing Aid Case
  - Plenty of spare batteries
  - Cleaning items (cleaning brush, cleaning cloth or alcohol prep pads, filters, etc)
  - Any accessories you utilize (TV streamer, Connect Clip, Compilot, Remote control, etc)

# Your routine may be different, here's how to stay on track:

- It never fails, after **every** holiday season we have patients who have a *mischievous grand-pup* get ahold of their hearing aids.
- To avoid this mishap, we recommend to **keep your routine** as normal as you can!
  - **For example:** If you always place your hearing aids in your hearing aid case on your nightstand, continue this while away from your home.
  - Another great tip is to **place your hearing aids in their respective case or charger** if they are not on your ears.



# Place yourself in a *'good position'*



- If you can, try and **sit with a wall behind your back**.
  - This helps reduce ambient noises that may spill over from the kitchen (dishwasher, etc).
- If you can, place yourself (or ask your host to place you) in a seat that allows you to **see everyone's face at the table**.
- If you're at a party- try and position yourself **away from the source of the music** if you are engaging in conversation.
- Avoid conversations at **highly trafficked areas** (such as the bar or buffet table).

# Avoid background noise when you can

- Feeling **overwhelmed by background noise**? Here are a few tips:
  - ***Ask your host to lower the music.*** Most likely others (even those with normal hearing) are also feeling conversation is strained because of the noise.
  - ***Ask your host to turn off the television during dinnertime.*** This will allow for optimal speech understanding and may even make your dinner a bit more memorable and special as well!



# Engage in conversation with those near you confidently

- Confidently expect to hear loved ones to your **right, left, and directly in front of you.**
- Try not to participate in conversations **over large distances.**
- Simply **move closer** to the desired conversation or ask to postpone the conversation until you are able to be physically closer.



# Practice ahead of time



- **Wear your hearing aids consistently.**
  - Do not put your hearing aids on before a big family gathering or party and expect them to assist you greatly, when your brain and ears haven't had time to properly acclimate to listening with them.
- **Wear them ahead of time** at restaurants, church meetings, bingo nights, and grocery stores to see which settings work best for you.
  - If you are struggling in these situations ask your audiologist to make adjustments for optimal speech understanding in complex listening situations.



# Think about additional assistive technologies

- Ask your audiologist if there are **different programs** you can access in your hearing aids.
  - Sometimes this can be achieved by the simple click of a button on your hearing aids, if programmed to do so.
- Ask your audiologist if your hearing aids are compatible with a **remote control or smart phone app** that acts as a remote control to help you make changes to your hearing aids.
- Ask your audiologist if your hearing aids are compatible with a **TV Streamer or remote mic** that may stream the desired speech of your TV program or conversational partner directly to your ears.
  - Many patients benefit from these additional technologies.

# Relax and take a breather



- You may experience ***'listening effort'*** while concentrating to hear friends and family over the holidays.
  - This can be defined as, ***"the mental exertion required to attend to, and understand, an auditory message"***.
- **It's okay to retreat to a quiet place** for a few minutes to give yourself a short break. Invite a friend or family member who you may not see all that often to retreat with you.
  - This will allow you to engage in a **one-on-one conversation** away from the crowd.

# Don't “*fake it ‘til you make it*”



- **We've all been here before-** you didn't quite hear the question that was asked to you, so you just smile and nod, **pretending** that you did.
- You might have **missed the end of a joke but join in on the laughter of the group anyways.**
- The technical term for this is called '**bluffing**' and is common amongst those who have hearing loss.
- Instead of bluffing, see the next slide on ways to manage this appropriately.

# Utilize Communication Strategies when you can

- If you are struggling in a conversation use ***conversation repair strategies*** or ***communication strategies***.
  - **Ask for the statement to be rephrased.** Some words or specific speech sounds may be harder for you to hear than others.
  - Ask others to **get your attention first**, before diving into a conversation with you.
  - Gently remind others to **speak slowly and clearly**.
  - **Do not engage in conversations across multiple rooms.**
  - **Utilize visual cues:** It's been tough in this season with masks and face coverings, but research has shown the more visual reinforcement a patient has in a complex environment, the better chance of understanding they will have. ***"The impact of lipreading on speech perception is correlated with the difficulty of the listening conditions"***.

# Enjoy yourself...Enjoy the season

- This precious time of year only comes around once a year.
- Don't put pressure on yourself to catch every word said.
- Focus on enjoying the presence of friends and family.



# References

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S-gxNYXogKU>

# Thank you & Happy Holidays from Hill Country Audiology!

We hope you get to make new memories and celebrate with your loved ones safely!

