

# Flatirons AUDIO SCOOP

Spring 2014

## Why Your Ears Keep Ringing

And what you can do about it.

### Free Tinnitus Seminar

Colorado's top Tinnitus expert, Dr. Julie Eschenbrenner, hosts an informational session to discuss causes and treatment options for this debilitating condition. You don't want to miss it.

#### DATE:

**Tuesday, May 13th  
6:00 PM to 7:30 PM**

*RSVP is required as seats are limited:*

**303.664.9111**

#### LOCATION:

Lafayette Public Library  
775 W Baseline Road  
Lafayette, CO 80026

Dr. Julie offers customized Tinnitus treatment options and accepts most insurance for hearing and Tinnitus evaluations.

## Hyperacusis and Tinnitus *What's the difference?*



"ACUSIS" is the ability to perceive sound normally. Therefore, one might assume HYPERacusis refers to a gift of super-hearing powers, like those of Superman.

In reality, hyperacusis is increased sensitivity to normal sound. It's as if someone cranked up the volume on the planet, and left volume switch stuck at full blast, causing pain in the ears.

Tinnitus, on the other hand, is perception of sound with no external sound stimulus. The buzzing, chirping can cause emotional distress, and even depression.

#### How prevalent are these conditions?

The Hyperacusis Network reports that 1 in 50,000 people has hyperacusis, and that 1 in 1,000 people who have tinnitus will also have hyperacusis.

The American Tinnitus association reports 50 million people in the United States experience tinnitus to some degree. Of these, about 16 million have it severe enough tinnitus to seek medical attention, and about two million pa-

tients are so seriously debilitated that they cannot function normally on a day-to-day basis.

#### Is hearing loss related to hyperacusis or tinnitus?

Although it's possible to suffer from either of these conditions with normal hearing, one major cause of both conditions is exposure to high volume noise, such as that experienced by military veterans, industrial workers, construction workers, and musicians. In fact, about thirty million American are exposed to high levels of noise at work.

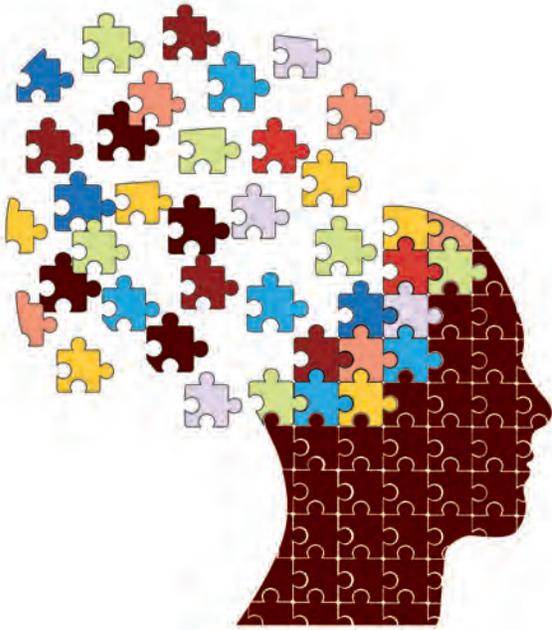
Concerts, gunshots, explosions, and even fireworks can be enough to trigger a case of hyperacusis, tinnitus, and temporary or permanent hearing loss. The symptoms are often so severe that patients withdraw from social interactions to avoid triggering pain or discomfort. The consequence is diminished quality of life.

There are many other causes of hyperacusis and tinnitus, such as some medications, diseases and disorders, and head trauma. If you have symptoms, it's important to be evaluated by an audiologist experienced in working with these conditions.

Dr. Julie Eschenbrenner is one of Colorado's leading experts in the evaluation and treatment of tinnitus and hyperacusis. Don't spend another day in pain. Call to make an appointment today.

**Expertise, Experience and Success in the Evaluation, Diagnosis and Treatment of Tinnitus and Hearing Disorders since 2007.**

## Study Links Dementia and Hearing Loss



A study at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, supported by The National Institute on Aging, suggests a significant higher risk of developing dementia in those with hearing loss.

“The general perception is that hearing loss is a relatively inconsequential part of aging,” states lead researcher, Frank Lin, M.D., Ph.D. “A lot of people ignore hearing loss because it’s such a slow and insidious process as we age. Even if

people feel as if they are not affected, we’re showing that it may well be a more serious problem.”

It is thought that years of struggling to decode sounds, or cognitive overload, “may overwhelm the brains of people with hearing loss, leaving them more vulnerable to dementia.” The link may be related to social isolation, a common behavior in those with hearing loss.

The study, published in *Archives of Neurology*, tested and followed 639 mentally sharp people over a period of 12 to 18 years. The participants, none of who had dementia at the beginning of the study, were closely followed and re-examined every one to two years.

“Researchers found that study participants with hearing loss at the beginning of the study were significantly more likely to develop dementia by the end. Compared with volunteers with normal hearing, those with mild, moderate, and severe hearing loss had twofold, threefold, and fivefold, respectively, the risk of developing dementia over time. The more hearing loss they had, the higher their likelihood of developing the memory-robbing disease.”

In another study conducted in 2013, Lin and his team tracked cognitive abilities, such as planning skills, memory, and concentration of almost 2,000 senior adults. The research showed those who began the study with a hearing loss were 24 percent more likely to experience diminished cognitive abilities.

## Ranger Cookies

- 1 cup vegetable shortening or butter (8 ounces)
- 1 cup brown sugar, firmly packed, light or dark
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 large eggs
- 2 cups King Arthur unbleached All-Purpose Flour
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 cup (3 1/2 ounces) old-fashioned rolled oats
- 1 cup (2 1/2 ounces) shredded coconut
- 1 cup (6 ounces) chocolate chips
- 3 cups (2 3/8 ounces) crispy rice cereal or cornflakes

Beat together the shortening and sugars, vanilla and salt until fluffy. Add the eggs and beat until smooth.

In a separate mixing bowl, mix together the flour, baking powder and baking soda. Add the flour mixture to the shortening mixture and beat until well blended.

Stir in the oats, coconut, chips and cereal, mixing just until blended. Drop dough by rounded teaspoons onto lightly greased or parchment-lined cookie sheets.

Bake the cookies in a preheated 350°F oven for 10 to 12 minutes, or until they’re golden brown. Yield: 60 2 to 2 1/2- inch cookies.



## New Mercury-Free Batteries



In 2011, due to a growing number of states enacting legislation to ban hearing aid batteries containing mercury, hearing aid battery manufacturers came together as an industry and agreed to eliminate mercury from hearing aid batteries altogether.

The technology continues to improve, thanks to quite a lot of research and development, but many of our patients report that their batteries don't seem to last as long. That's because today's batteries need to be exposed to air for a minute before they activate fully.

When you change the batteries in your hearing aids, pull the sticker off and wait a full minute before placing the battery in the hearing aid. Doing so will bring the battery to full power, resulting in longer battery life.

### How Long Should My Batteries Last?

We get this question quite a lot. Hearing aid batteries can last from three days to three weeks, depending on the hearing aid, level of technology, battery type, and hours of use per day.

### Tips for Longer Battery Life

- *Store batteries at room temperature.*
- *Open the battery door when you're not wearing your hearing aids, such as overnight.*
- *Buy the freshest batteries available. While drug stores and big box stores may order in bulk and save you a few pennies, we order batteries every few weeks, ensuring a fresh supply of batteries is always in stock.*
- *Wash and dry your hands before changing batteries.*
- *Never carry loose batteries, as coins and other metal objects may short them out. Use a battery caddy to keep your fresh batteries on hand wherever you go.*

## There Is So Much in Life to Hear May is Better Hearing and Speech Month

Millions of Americans of all ages and from all walks of life suffer from some degree of hearing loss.

Early detection can save valuable treatment time and enhance language development for babies and young children. Early testing can also help prevent a child's hearing impairment from being mislabeled later as a learning disorder. For teenagers and young adults, identification of a hearing problem can improve academic performance and social interaction.

For adults and the elderly, a proper hearing evaluation can increase confidence in communication with friends, family, and colleagues. If you notice signs of hearing loss, consult an audiologist. There is so much in life to hear.

Dr. Julie is a member of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. *American Speech-Language Hearing Association.*



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## Stop Shouting, I can't Hear You!



When communicating with someone with a hearing loss, don't shout. Shouting can distort your words, making you even more difficult to understand. Instead, look at the person directly and speak distinctly. Don't mumble and don't cover your mouth, as most people who have diminished hearing learn to read lips, whether they realize it, or not.

## Are You Hearing Everything?

If some things don't sound right, you could have a hearing problem.

- **Do you ask people to repeat things?**
- **Can you hear telephone callers clearly?**
- **Do others complain that your radio or TV is too loud?**

No matter what your age—young or old—hearing problems can be barriers to success in school or at work. If you have trouble hearing, call Dr. Julie and have your hearing tested.