

# Healthy Outcomes

National Speech-Language-Hearing Month

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Central PA  
Health Care Quality Unit  
Monthly Newsletter  
May 2024

[WEBSITE](#)

## PUT THE Q-TIP DOWN WHEN CLEANING YOUR EARS



### **Purpose of Earwax**

The purpose of earwax (cerumen) is to keep your ear canal clean. It is a normal, protective coating for the sensitive skin of the ear canal. Earwax helps to keep dust and dirt away from the eardrum. It has antibacterial characteristics to protect against infections, it functions as an insect repellent to keep bugs out of your ears, and it helps to lubricate the ear canal, which prevents dry, itchy skin.

The ear is structured to remove its own earwax. All that's called for on your part is regular showering and cleaning the external ear with a cloth.

### **Dangers of Using Q-Tips (Cotton Swabs)**

Earwax impaction: Using a cotton swab to try to clear earwax from your ear can push the earwax deeper in. This can prevent earwax from naturally clearing and cause it to build up inside your ear. The accumulation of too much

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### **WHAT'S NEW**

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earwax can lead to pain, a feeling of fullness in the ear or muffled hearing.

Rupturing the eardrum: The most common cause of eardrum rupture is injury to the ear. This typically occurs from using cotton swabs or other instruments in the ear at home. Not only is rupturing the eardrum painful, but it can also lead to hearing loss and infections.

Infection: Using a cotton swab in your ear can introduce different bacteria, dust, and dirt into your ear and lead to ear infections.

Getting material stuck in the ear: Cotton material from cotton swabs can also get lodged and stuck in the ear. This can cause hearing loss, infections, and discomfort.

Some people may overproduce earwax, which can plug the ear canal and cause earaches, infections, and other problems. An excess of earwax can result in some hearing loss, which typically resolves once the wax is removed. Earwax removal should only be done by a licensed audiologist or a physician who has been trained to remove earwax.

If your problem isn't serious, but you do feel like you have too much earwax buildup, you can try putting a few drops of baby oil, hydrogen peroxide, mineral oil, or glycerin in your ear to soften the wax. Most over-the-counter wax removal kits are effective at softening wax so it can work its way out of the ear naturally. [Salus University Health](#)

## Speech-Language-Hearing Month Facts

- Hearing loss is the **third most common chronic physician condition** in the U.S., right behind high blood pressure and arthritis. ([CDC](#))
- Around **one in four adults** in the U.S. **above the age of 65** experience disabled hearing loss, and the effects only worsen with age. ([NIDCD](#))
- Only **20%** of those who could benefit from using a hearing aid have one. ([HLAA](#))
- More than **48 million Americans** experience hearing loss. ([HLAA](#))



### All Things Cochlear Implant: Q&A with an Audiologist

Learn about everything cochlear implant-related, including how they work and whether they might be a good fit for someone with hearing loss. Salus University Health [Pennsylvania Ear Institute](#)

# WHY DO BALANCE DISORDERS ACCOMPANY HEARING LOSS?

AUTHOR: [ADMIN](#) | OCTOBER 25, 2022

Many people who experience hearing loss will notice that they are not as steady on their feet as they once were. This is not a coincidence. Our ears are much more complex instruments than most of us tend to realize, and they can have a dramatic effect on our balance when they are not working as they should.

Our ears are vital to our balance, and our spatial awareness, so when there is a problem with our hearing, this can mean that they are affected too, and it is not unusual for balance disorders to accompany hearing loss.




## Common Symptoms of Balance Disorders That Accompany Hearing Loss

There are several balance disorders that go hand in hand with hearing loss, so if your hearing has started to fail, and you have been diagnosed with hearing loss by a qualified audiologist, you might want to be on the lookout for the following that could indicate a balance disorder such as Meniere's Disease or otosclerosis:



- Dizziness
- Feeling like the room is spinning
- Spatial disorientation
- Memory loss
- Brain fog
- Falling over

If you experience any of these symptoms in conjunction with hearing loss, then it is important that you see your audiologist as soon as possible as they may be able to make a diagnosis. And because, often, once your hearing loss is being treated, symptoms of balance disorders may improve. [Full Article](#)

 Save

## AAC Tip of the Day:


*Patience is key!*

When communicating with someone who uses AAC, it's important to **be patient** and **give the person adequate time to respond**.

Communicating with AAC requires more time than speaking / using mouth words. **Don't interrupt** while the AAC user formulates their thoughts.

And remember - the amount of time it takes to communicate with AAC is **not** an indicator of the person's ability to think and understand!

 NWACS  
www.nwacs.info

**Your ears have the smallest bones found in the human body.**

# Healthy Tech Habits = Healthy Hearing

Technology should help you stay informed, keep you connected, and have fun. But regular misuse of tech can be hazardous to your hearing health. The World Health Organization (WHO) warns that 1.1 billion young people are at risk of hearing loss due to unsafe tech use, and dangerous levels of noise at entertainment venues.

## 5 TIPS TO PROTECT YOUR HEARING



**Listen through your headphones at half the maximum volume or less.**

WHO's recommends listening at 80 decibels max. Too loud for too long can cause permanent hearing loss!



**Take listening breaks.**

WHO recommends using headphones for no more than 40 hours a week. Otherwise, you run the risk of gradual hearing damage.



**Use noise cancelling headphones.**

Not only will your music sound better, but you'll be less likely to turn up the volume to dangerous levels to cover background noise.



**Wear hearing protection at concerts and other live events.**

Basic foam earplugs can offer substantial protection from dangerous levels of noise.



**Stand far from loudspeakers.**

They're amped up to be heard far and wide, so standing in close proximity can cause immediate, sudden, and permanent hearing loss.



# TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Erica Shultz 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Training

## Social Media 101: Keeping Ourselves and Individuals Who Have Disabilities Safe

May 14, 2024

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

**Hosted by:** The Advocacy Alliance

**Presenter:** Michelle Gwinn Nutter, a Pennsylvania-certified teacher and former Safe and Supportive Schools Manager for the PA Center for Safe Schools, is an Education and Outreach Program Manager and Civil Rights Outreach Specialist.

**This event is offered at no cost.** The Zoom link is:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87962983067?pwd=Vy9hRkQ4TFBKcktVemJ5bE9yOW5Rdz09>

Meeting ID: 879 6298 3067

Passcode: 177744

The call-in number is: 1-929-205-6099

Our HCQU registered nurses provide free health-related training to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (ID/DD), and to caregivers, service providers and county staff.

Contact the [regional nurse](#) to discuss virtual training opportunities specific to your needs in your county. The Training Index has been replaced with [A Guide to Central PA HCQU Supports and Services](#).



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Summer Safety

10:00 AM ET - Virtual

HCQU Trainings

JOIN HERE



### Take A FREE [HCQU Online Course](#)

Our courses are great for DSPs, or anyone interested in expanding their knowledge of different healthcare issues.

### PADDNN Members Meeting via ZOOM

“Working with Individuals with Developmental Disabilities and Mental Illness as they Age.”

June 12, 2024, 9am ET - 12:30pm ET

[PADDNN Agenda for 06-12-24](#)



# Grilled Sausage with Potatoes and Green Beans

Allrecipes

## Ingredients

- ¾ pound fresh green beans, trimmed and halved
- ½ pound red potatoes, quartered
- 1 large onion, sliced
- 1-pound smoked sausage, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil
- 1 teaspoon butter
- ⅓ cup water

## Directions

1. Preheat an outdoor grill for high heat.
2. Place green beans, red potatoes, onion, and sausage on a large sheet of foil. Season with salt and pepper, sprinkle with oil, and top with butter. Tightly seal foil around the ingredients, leaving only a small opening. Pour water into the opening, and seal.
3. Place foil packet on the preheated grill. Cook 20 to 30 minutes, turning once, until sausage is browned, and vegetables are tender. [Recipe](#)

## MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK MAY 13-19, 2024

*Find your moments for movement.*

One of the most important things you can do to help protect your mental health is regular movement. Moving more can increase your energy, reduce stress and anxiety, and boost your self-esteem. If you'd like to improve your mental health by moving more, read our tips to help you get started. [Read more tips](#)



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## Counties

Blair, Centre, Clinton,  
Columbia, Huntingdon,  
Juniata, Lycoming, Mifflin,  
Montour, Northumberland,  
Schuylkill, Snyder, Union

Are your new staff on the monthly newsletter distribution list? Email the [HCQU](#) to add names and email address.