

# Northland Hearing NEWS.....

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## May is Better Hearing Month!

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*"True love comes quietly, without banners or flashing lights. If you hear bells, get your ears checked."*

*Erich Segal*

An estimated 28 million Americans have hearing loss. If you think you or a loved one is among them, there is help. This May and every May since 1927, the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) has used the "May is Better Hearing and Speech Month" (BHSM) celebration as a time to encourage Americans to get their hearing tested and determine if they have a hearing loss.

You or a loved one may have a hearing loss if you:

- Frequently ask people to repeat themselves
- Often turn your ear toward a sound to hear it better
- Understand people better when you wear your glasses or look directly at their faces
- Lose your place in group conversations
- Keep the volume on your radio or TV at a level that others say is too loud
- Have pain or ringing in your ears
- Notice that some sounds remain clear (often low-pitched sounds such as the bass line in music) while others may seem fuzzy (frequently women's and children's high-pitched voices).

People who see themselves in these statements should see a Doctor of Audiology for a hearing test. Even a very slight hearing loss can have an impact on your daily life. Hearing loss is treatable and there is no reason for anyone to miss all the important sounds of life.

### My 2 Cents...

When properly inserted, earplugs would give you a temporary hearing loss of about 25-30dB. You will quickly get an idea of what partial hearing loss is all about if you were to wear these plugs for just one day at work, at dinner, listening to the TV, or meetings. While in some situations this may seem like bliss, you will soon come to the realization of how much we really depend on this critical sensory ability.

## ABOUT KRISTY M. KURTZ, AU.D...

Dr. Kurtz holds a Doctor of Audiology degree from the University of Florida. She has practiced clinical audiology in a variety of settings for more than 10 years including: ear, nose and throat specialists offices, private practice, and hearing aid manufacturers.

## WHAT IS AUDIOLOGY?

From Latin, '*audire*' to hear, audiology is the branch of science that studies hearing, balance, and related disorders. Employing various testing strategies (e.g. hearing tests, otoacoustic emissions, videonystagmography, and electrophysiologic tests) audiology aims to determine whether someone can hear within normal range, and if not, which portions of hearing (high, middle, or low frequencies are affected and to what degree. If an audiologist determines that a hearing loss or vestibular abnormality is present, he or she will provide recommendation to a patient as to what options (e.g. hearing aids, cochlear implants, surgery, appropriate medical referrals) may be of assistance.

In addition to testing hearing, an audiologist can also work with a wide range of clientele (including pediatric populations) in rehabilitation (e.g. hearing aids) and assessment of the vestibular system.

Since January 2007, a doctoral degree has been the entry level degree to become a practicing Audiologist in the United States of America.

## RECENT NEWS: HEARING AID TAX CREDIT

A bill has been introduced in the House of Representatives H. R. 1646 on March 19, 2009 to allow up to \$1000 tax credit for a purchase of hearing aids. It is time that those who have hearing loss get a (small) tax break for a hearing aid purchase. Bills for a tax credit of \$500 per hearing aid or \$1,000 for up to 2 hearing aids have been introduced four years in a row now and we want this to be the year the Hearing Aid Tax Credit Act gets passed. All it requires is simple action. We all either know someone who has hearing loss, uses a hearing aid, may have some difficulty hearing ourselves or "swim" in a gene pool where we know we will eventually end up with some hearing loss (like myself). Visit [www.hearingaidtaxcredit.org](http://www.hearingaidtaxcredit.org) to voice your support!

Canadian comic actor and writer Don Harron is well known for his TV and book character Charlie Farquharson, popular on the Hee Haw television show. Mr. Harron shared the following in his public service announcements: *"My father was awarded the Military Cross at Cambrai in 1919 because he heard the enemy in trenches 200 yards away preparing for a surprise attack. I inherited that sensitive hearing system, but my razor-sharp, 20-20 hearing ended with an accident on the set of my television comedy series. I played an Olympic culler... who used his oar as a vaulting pole. Instead of vaulting onto a mat, my forehead hit the cement studio floor. I missed the laughs- but even worse, immediately got a fierce ringing in my left ear, and later a 40 percent hearing loss. It's not funny that one out of 10 of us has a significant hearing loss. Happily most of us can benefit with hearing aids like me. Do you know one of the best things about receiving hearing help? I can now watch old movies at 3 a.m. without the TV volume waking my wife!"*



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