

Outreach

For Members of Benefits USA



How to Protect Your Hearing from Loss at Any Age: Expert Tips to Support Hearing Health at Any Age

(BPT) - Taking care of your health is more important as you age, but one aspect of your well-being that's often neglected is hearing health. For many, hearing loss is ignored until its effects appear: difficulty socializing, isolation or depression, balance problems and even cognitive decline.

Hearing is an integral part of how everyone interacts with the world, physically, mentally and emotionally. And although hearing loss is not reversible, it can be managed with proper intervention.

Here are tips to help you protect your hearing while engaging in activities you love, so you can continue to enjoy them for many years to come, plus advice for checking your hearing status and benefiting from the latest hearing technology.

How loud is too loud?

According to the National Institutes of Health, extended periods of exposure to sounds at or above 85 A-weighted decibels (dBA) can cause hearing loss. For perspective, your lawnmower produces 80-100 dBA, and fireworks 140-160 dBA. Many common activities can impact your hearing over time, leading to hearing loss, tinnitus (ringing in your ears) and balance issues.

For this reason, it's important to wear hearing protection when engaging in any loud activities, just as you wear sunscreen to protect your skin while outdoors.

Because damage to your ears is cumulative and may not be realized until later in life, the time to protect them is now.

Occupational hazards - at home

While the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has required the use of hearing protection for fields like manufacturing, construction and transportation with exposure to sound at or above 85 dBA since 1981, it's not something you may think about when working around the house.

However, while doing yardwork or home projects with power tools, lawnmowers and leaf blowers, hearing protection is recommended just as if you were on the job.

The sound of music

If you love attending concerts or play an instrument yourself, too much exposure can be detrimental to your hearing. The National Institutes of Health advises trying inexpensive single-use foam ear plugs to help protect your ears from occasional exposure to loud music and other sounds.

Recreational noise

The same goes for many other activities that can generate loud sounds. If you enjoy motorcycling, snowmobiling, shooting or motor boating, hearing protection is always a good idea. Even typical sporting events can range from 94-110 dBA, making them among the noisiest environments people are regularly exposed to.

How to determine noise levels

If you're concerned about noise where you frequently spend time, there are some downloadable apps for your smartphone that can gauge the decibel level for you to help you determine if you need hearing protection.

What to do if you notice hearing loss

If you frequently miss parts of conversations or often ask people to repeat themselves, it's possible hearing loss is the culprit. Other clues: you turn up the TV or radio louder, or you hear intermittent ringing or buzzing in your ears.

The best way to know is by taking a hearing test. Try an easy, convenient online version like the one at LexieHearing.com, developed to identify the possibility of some forms of hearing impairment. It's always advisable to consult with a hearing health professional if you're concerned about your hearing.

Good news about today's hearing aids

Hearing aid technology has come a long way in recent years. In October 2022, the FDA established a new category of over-the-counter (OTC) hearing aids for adults 18 and older with perceived mild-to-moderate hearing loss in order to increase the public's access to hearing aids and improve overall hearing health. These new hearing aids are available at retail stores nationwide without a prescription.

For example, Lexie Hearing provides its newest Lexie B2 Plus hearing aids direct to persons 18 and older with perceived mild-to-moderate hearing loss, along with free lifetime Lexie Expert support. Their FDA-cleared, rechargeable hearing aids offer clear, quality sound powered by Bose, which provides up to 18 hours of run time on a single charge.

Some OTC options - such as the Lexie B2 Plus Hearing Aid - are also FSA and HSA eligible, and available through some insurance hearing health plans.

The importance of hearing

For anyone with mild-to-moderate hearing loss, being able to hear your friends and loved ones, as well as participating in everything you love, makes all the difference for your physical, mental and emotional well-being. Using hearing aids may help slow the risk of cognitive decline for some, and even improve your interpersonal relationships.

Being able to fully participate in your active life for years to come is well worth the effort of protecting your hearing - and successfully managing the hearing loss you may already experience.

Learn how to stay fully engaged in your life at LexieHearing.com.

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95% of Dog Owners Unknowingly Put Thier Pets at Risk for Tapeworms: What You Should Know

(BPT) - We all know that worms are bad news for your pet. Not only can they cause health problems in your dog, but some can even pass deadly diseases to you and your family. Zoonotic tapeworms, for example, are a common intestinal worm that can affect dogs, but also have the potential to infect people.

Anytime dogs are infected and actively shedding eggs in their feces, they can pose a risk to people - especially children. This is why it's important to pick up your dog's waste, get in the habit of washing your hands and teach children to wash their hands and avoid putting their fingers in their mouths. Sandboxes, playgrounds and even some beaches can be high-risk areas.

Remember: Consult your vet to get more personalized information about your dog's specific risk of worms. They will factor in your dog's lifestyle and the region where you live, and can recommend a treatment plan or heartworm prevention plan tailored to your pet. If you suspect your dog has worms, schedule a visit to treat the infestation quickly - and get your dog back to optimal health.

Learn more at yourpetandyou.com.

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF MEMBERS

The Annual Meeting of the Members of Benefits USA will be held at 12444 Powerscourt Drive, Suite 500A, St. Louis, MO 63131, on Monday, June 12, 2024 at 1:45 p.m. (CST) for election of Directors and for the transaction of such other business as may properly come before the meeting and any adjournment thereof.

The above notice is given pursuant to the By-Laws of the Association.

PROXY **Benefits USA** **June 12, 2024 Annual Meeting of Members** **THIS PROXY IS SOLICITED ON BEHALF OF** **BENEFITS USA**

The undersigned member of Benefits USA does hereby constitute and appoint the President of Benefits USA, the true and lawful attorney(s) of the undersigned with full power of substitution, to appear and act as the proxy or proxies of the undersigned at the Annual Meeting of the Members of Benefits USA and at any and all adjournments thereof, and to vote for and in the name, place and stead of the undersigned, as fully as the undersigned might or could do if personally present, as set forth below:

1. FOR [], or to [] WITHHOLD AUTHORITY to vote for, the following nominees for Board of Directors:
Don Breckenridge Jr, John Engman, and Zachary Smilack
2. In their discretion, the proxies are authorized to vote upon such other business as may properly come before the Meeting.

This proxy, when properly executed, will be voted in the manner directed by the undersigned member. If no direction is made, this proxy will be voted for the election of directors and officers.

DATED: _____, 2024

Signature _____

Name (please print) _____

Please date and sign and return promptly to 12444 Powerscourt Drive, Suite 500A, St. Louis, MO 63131 whether or not you expect to attend this meeting. The Proxy is revocable and will not affect your right to vote in person in the event that you attend the meeting.

St. Louis, Missouri
May 15, 2024
Date

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Benefits USA

For information regarding your membership
and association services, call or write:

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1-800-992-8044 or (636) 530-7200

Articles in this newsletter are meant to be informative, enlightening, and helpful to you. While all information contained herein is meant to be completely factual, it is always subject to change. Articles are not intended to provide medical advice, diagnosis or treatment.

Consult your doctor before starting any exercise program.