This page was exported from - Shelburne Free Press
Export date: Fri Oct 30 6:11:22 2026 / +0000 GMT

Speech and Hearing Month seeks to normalize conversation about hearing loss]

Being able to hear properly has a huge impact on your life.

From everyday things like listening to music or watching a TV show to social interaction with others, how you hear the world affects almost everything you do.

May is Speech and Hearing Month, devoted to awareness of hearing loss, normalizing conversations about it, and eliminating the stigma of wearing hearing aids.

If you are 50 or over, you should get your hearing checked every year. Many people don't realize their hearing ability has decreased, as it may happen slowly.

Like with many things, the earlier you find out you have hearing loss, the sooner you can do something about it.

?Speech and hearing go hand-in-hand,? explained Bridgette Assuncao, Hearing Instrument Specialist, with Hear Well Be Well Hearing Clinic in Orangeville. ?Audiologists, hearing instrument specialists, speech and language pathologists, and communications disorders assistants all work together to manage communications. As we develop as a child, you're taking in what everyone is saying to you, how they pronounce words, and we have that part of the brain that picks up language but we have to hear the sounds to learn how to communicate. Not only do we take in communication through our eyes, we learn about the world through speech and hearing things.?

Part of Speech and Hearing Month is awareness so people can recognize the signs of hearing loss.

?During Speech and Hearing month there is a lot of education. All the disciplines in hearing, work together so people have better health,? explained Wendy Moore, marketing manager at Hear Well Be Well. ?The fact that you have untreated hearing loss, means you will start to lose your ability to recognize speech because your brain is not engaging with those words. The ears are the channel that sends message to the brain. Untreated hearing is dramatically connected to your risk of dementia. If you have untreated loss, you are five times more likely to develop dementia, and even with moderate hearing loss, you are two times more likely to develop dementia. The reason for that is the part of your brain that is used to process outside noise stops being engaged. Untreated hearing loss is now listed as the number one modifiable risk factor in the list of risks for dementia. Speech and Hearing month is about normalizing the conversation so people don't feel there is a stigma to it. If you hurt your wrist, you wear a wrist brace, and no one would think anything of it. With hearing aids, it's the same concept.?

The awareness campaign also strives to eliminate some of the stigma some people may feel when wearing a hearing aid. Manufacturers now produce hearing aids that are almost invisible when worn. They even have a new line of products that look like earbuds that some people like.

?Usually when somebody does have hearing loss, sometimes they don't even notice or recognize it until five to seven years later,? Bridgette explained. ?One of the points of Speech and Hearing Month is to recognize and know the signs of hearing loss. People don't realize the connection between communication and hearing loss. That can result in depression and withdrawing from social events. The point of hearing aids is to give you better speech clarity. Hearing aids now, are small and so much more technologically advanced. The point is to hear and communicate and engage.?

Lisa Diaz, customer care representative at Hear Well Be Well, provided an example of hearing aids that are designed to fit a person's ear.

?This is a custom style,? Lisa explained. ?Bridgette will check your ear and check for wax, and if all is good to go, some impression material is place in the ear canal, and we get the custom shape of your ear. We have a lot of good information and tools on our website help guide you to see if getting a hearing test is a good idea.?

Speech and Hearing Month is a good time to take your hearing into consideration.

You can get a free hearing test at Hear Well Be Well, and if you need some help, their experts can guide you through the steps to prevent further hearing loss and correct any issues you may be having.