

October Chapter Meeting



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Learn about new specialized phones and phone devices, and how you may qualify to get one FREE. A representative from California Phones (“CTAP”) will show what’s available to help the hard-of-hearing.

**Thursday October 14 at 6:30 pm
on Zoom**
[Register in advance for this meeting](#)

Hearing loss — Why me?

Gael Hannan, September 6, 2021

We struggle to hear. We put our head in our hands as tinnitus rages and hyperacusis makes unbearable sounds inside our skull.

Why me? We ask this silently to others but loudly to ourselves. Why does this have to happen to me? Why can't I have an issue that medication or therapy can fix, or at least eliminate for a few hours or a few days?

If the universe could answer you, or God and the angels, or whatever spirits sustain you—they might answer this: Why NOT you?

Why would you not be susceptible to any of the gazillion problems that can ‘go wrong’ with the organic, live, breathing creature that’s you, a human being.

Poets and preachers tell us that, in our world, all things rise and all things pass away. Flowers, animals, drops of water, food and plants—and the human body. Some things change in shape and content as they grow, or as the elements wear them down. It’s the same with the human body; as we change from baby people into older versions of ourselves, not all the developments are the good kind. Some cause pain, both physical and mental, and hearing loss and chronic head noise are just two of these conditions.

What I had to realize, although it took a long time, that whatever caused my hearing loss, it wasn't me. We haven't done bad things to deserve this as punishment. Perhaps we made some poor choices in exposing our hearing to excessive, damaging noise. And maybe we didn't seek help as quickly as we should when we first noticed problems. But we did not make this “horrible” thing happen.

When we understand that forces beyond our control caused our body to develop hearing loss or head noise, and that these same forces affect most other people in some way, then it's

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Chapter Calendar

October 27 at Noon

Board meeting on Zoom

November 11 at 6:30

Monthly Chapter Meeting on Zoom, speaker to be determined

Lip reading: classes return to in-person format at the Weingart Center on Oct. 27, with face masks and clear shields.

September chapter meeting recap

Our Professional Advisor, Dr. David DeKriek of Fidelity Hearing Center, gave us an overview of pending federal and state legislation relating to hearing.

He also reviewed the newest technologies offered by the major hearing aid companies. There are remarkable advances in technology on the way!

Memoriam

Long-time member Maxine Barton-Bauman passed away on September 7, 2021. Maxine was very involved in our chapter activities. It was at her suggestion that 5-year-old Connor Waterman become our Walk4Hearing Team Leader, starting Connor's involvement in the Walk for the past 7 years. She was always open to questions about her cochlear implant. The many rooms at the new Long Beach City Hall, including the Council Chamber, are looped because of her efforts. Maxine was a fixture at our Board meetings and, through the years, held various offices. Her presence and influence in our chapter will be sorely missed.

Member profile: Gail Morrison

What brought you to HLAA?

In 2006, Ellen Mathis brought me to my first meeting. She was in another organization that I belong to and she has hearing loss and told me that there are many professional members. When I walked into the room, I knew that this was a roomful of people with hearing loss, just like me. It was empowering! Ellen continued to pick me up for many years.

What is your involvement with the chapter?

Louise Allen asked me to be Recording Secretary when nominations were announced. I told her that I couldn't do it as I'd have trouble hearing. She said, "We all have hearing loss." I felt accepted and became the new Recording Secretary. From then on, I became involved with setting up Programs and also handling Press to the media. In 2006, I became President from 2006-2009 and am currently President, again 2018 to present.

How does HLAA help you?

As a support group and an educational organization, I have learned what hearing loss is and what to do about it. The face-to-face and Zoom contacts have allowed me to be in an HOH group and learn about new technology besides hearing aids and to "practice" talking to other HOH members. I've learned so much through the many varied speakers, monthly newsletters, and have been learning how to be more assertive. I'm now an advocate.

Why me?

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easier to change the question to: Why NOT me?

It's normal to be angry because you must struggle to hear. Who are you going to be angry at? Yourself, your parents, society? OK, that's normal. And it's common to feel embarrassed, even shame and guilt, at how our condition affects our interaction with others.

But not as a permanent state, because it doesn't achieve anything. The only way these emotions will help you hear better is to use them as stepping stones to acceptance. When you replace painful attitudes with more positive ones, you can get on with the business of doing something about it (and there are many things you can do).

I still have those down days of frustration, when I feel like I just can't do this today...why do I have to be the one going through this...why do I have to be the one who can't enjoy music the way I used to and instead, I have to listen to the world's worst band playing in my head? Why!?

Then I stop. I change the questions. At my age (or any age), to have a body that is perfect and pain-free, and a mind that is free from worry or crazy-making thoughts, is unrealistic. But if not hearing loss, what other condition would I choose? Would I rather be my husband, who suffers from constant neck pain, and who struggles to sleep comfortably every single night? Would I rather be going through the worry, pain and indignities of cancer, like my sister does?

I can't truly imagine their pain or fear, just as they can't really understand mine. But we acknowledge and respect and support each other for our individual burdens.

So, howl at the moon and wave your fists at the heavens, if that will clear your emotions and make you feel better, for a little while. Then, find other ways to go forward. I promise, I'll be going forward with you. Why not me?

<https://hearinghealthmatters.org/betterhearingconsumer/2021/hearing-loss-why-me/?fbclid=IwAR1VuCyphWcoBuCT35dRUFpFLOoD8o85bgrjwsMW1F4pWuXg7Nvu7ij6tqA>

What is an acoustic neuroma?

Overview

Acoustic neuroma, also known as vestibular schwannoma, is a noncancerous and usually slow-growing tumor that develops on the main (vestibular) nerve leading from your inner ear to your brain. Branches of this nerve directly influence your balance and hearing, and pressure from an acoustic neuroma can cause hearing loss, ringing in your ear and unsteadiness.

Acoustic neuroma usually arises from the Schwann cells covering this nerve and grows slowly or not at all. Rarely, it may grow rapidly and become large enough to press against the brain and interfere with vital functions.

Treatments for acoustic neuroma include regular monitoring, radiation and surgical removal.

Symptoms

Signs and symptoms of acoustic neuroma are often easy to miss and may take many years to develop. They usually happen because of the tumor's effects on the hearing and balance nerves. Pressure from the tumor on nearby nerves controlling facial muscles and sensation (facial and trigeminal nerves), nearby blood vessels, or brain structures may also cause problems.

As the tumor grows, it may cause more noticeable or severe signs and symptoms.

Common signs and symptoms of acoustic neuroma include:

- Hearing loss, usually gradually worsening over months to years—although in rare cases sudden—and occurring on only one side or

more severe on one side

- Ringing (tinnitus) in the affected ear
- Unsteadiness or loss of balance
- Dizziness (vertigo)
- Facial numbness and weakness or loss of muscle movement
- In rare cases, an acoustic neuroma may grow large enough to compress the brainstem and become life-threatening.

When to see your doctor

See your doctor if you notice hearing loss in one ear, ringing in your ear or trouble with your balance.

Early diagnosis of an acoustic neuroma may help keep the tumor from growing large enough to cause serious consequences, such as total hearing loss.

Causes

The cause of acoustic neuromas can be linked to a problem with a gene on chromosome 22.

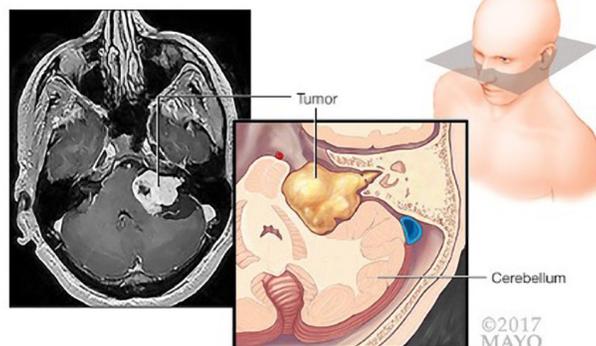
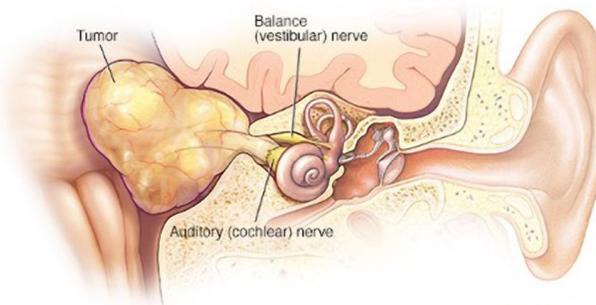
Normally, this gene produces a tumor suppressor protein that helps control the growth of Schwann cells covering the nerves.

Experts don't know what causes this problem with the gene. In most cases of acoustic neuroma, there is no known cause. This faulty gene is also inherited in neurofibromatosis type 2, a rare disorder that usually involves the growth of tumors on the hearing and balance nerves on both sides of your head (bilateral vestibular schwannomas).

Complications

An acoustic neuroma may cause a variety of permanent complications, including:

- Hearing loss
- Facial numbness and weakness
- Difficulties with balance



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For more information about our chapter, visit hlaa-lb-lakewood.org

Questions? Contact us by email at info@hlaa-lb-lakewood.org or phone Katie Wright (323) 205-6794

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acoustic neuroma

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– Ringing in the ear

Large tumors may press on your brainstem, preventing the normal flow of fluid between your brain and spinal cord (cerebrospinal fluid). In this case, fluid can build up in your head (hydrocephalus), increasing the pressure inside your skull.

Update on AB598 Let California Kids Hear legislation

This program is moving forward but not through legislation. The State of California is taking steps to support deaf and hard of hearing children by rolling out the Hearing Aid Coverage for Children Program (HACCP). The new program will cover hearing aids, bone conduction hearing aids and related services for children under age 18, whose families have a household income of up to 600 percent of the federal poverty level and who are not otherwise eligible for Medi-Cal/ CCS.

The program was initially rolled out on July 1, 2021 with a paper application process and has been followed by the launch of an online application portal in September.

More information for parents and providers is posted on the Department of Health Care Services website: <https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/Pages/HACCP.aspx>

Board news

The Board is continuing to recommend that our monthly Chapter meetings be held virtually. Weingart is open but a mask mandate is still in place. Communication is difficult for us with masks on. It makes sense for us to wait.

Lip reading news

Linda is pleased to announce that the Lip Reading Class will resume in-person at Weingart on October 27 with masks and clear shields.

*Excerpt from an article in the **AARP Bulletin** about signs that you may have osteoporosis...*

You're noticing some hearing loss

One study of nearly 144,000 women found that osteoporosis and low bone density were independently associated with up to a 30 percent higher risk of developing moderate or severe hearing loss. That means any decrease in your ability to hear may signal an underlying issue.

Why the two are related is unclear, says Sharon Curhan, M.D., physician and epidemiologist with the Channing Division of Network Medicine at Brigham and Women's Hospital. "Possibly, the aging-related changes in the composition and function of the bones that surround the ear, which protect the nerves and structures that play important roles in hearing and balance, may lead to hearing loss," she says.

<https://www.aarp.org/health/conditions-treatments/info-2021/osteoporosis-warning-signs.html>



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