

FALL
UPDATE
2025

Sound BYTES

INFORMATION FOR YOUR EARS

Hear Your Best for the Holidays - While Maximizing Your Benefits

As we approach the end of the year, it's the perfect time to check in on your hearing health – and make the most of your insurance benefits before they reset in the New Year.

Here's why scheduling sooner makes sense:

- **Maximize your benefits:** Many insurance plans offer coverage for hearing services. However, they don't roll over. That means you could end up paying more out-of-pocket next year when your deductible resets. If you've met your deductible or have unused benefits, now is the ideal time to take advantage of coverage.
- **Avoid the year-end rush:** Appointments fill up quickly in the last quarter of the year. Scheduling earlier ensures you get the appointment time that works best for you.
- **Hearing aids and accessories often take 1-2 weeks to arrive** after being ordered. If you wait until December, we may not have enough time to complete testing, selection, and fitting before your benefits reset.
- **Improving your hearing now** means you can enjoy the holidays with more confidence, connection, and clarity.

If you've been putting off a hearing evaluation or follow-up, now is the time to take the next step. Contact us at 262-549-5150 and one of our audiology assistants will work to understand your needs and get you scheduled appropriately. If you're unsure what your insurance covers, our team will help to verify your benefits and walk you through the process.

We're here to help you hear your best - not just during the holidays, but every day.

Auracast – A New Era of Wireless Audio

Imagine being able to stream airport gate announcements, live theater performances, or even the TV at home, in a sports, bar, or at the gym – directly to your hearing aids. With Auracast, now you can. Auracast is a new form of Bluetooth technology designed for convenience and assistance for hearing in complex listening environments. Unlike that of traditional Bluetooth, Auracast also allows an unlimited amount of hearing devices to stream audio from a single source.

How does it work? Auracast uses a unique transmitter to detect various audio sources. An Auracast user can select the specific audio source of interest and stream that audio directly through their hearing devices. Available Auracast broadcasts are detected in a similar way to Wi-Fi networks. Here's an example: Let's say you are at an airport that uses Auracast (several already do). Each airport gate will have an Auracast transmitter. Simply find your gate number on your phone using the "Find Auracast Broadcast" feature - all gate announcements will be streamed directly to your hearing aid or Auracast compatible earbuds so that you don't miss your flight.

Where is Auracast? Most newer hearing aids are compatible with Auracast. Your audiologist can help determine if your hearing aids are Auracast-enabled. Google will soon be a tool to locate public venues with Auracast. Many new TV's, smartphones, tablets, & computers already are or will be Auracast-enabled. Look for the Auracast logo:



Calling All Hunters

Deer hunting is a favorite pastime for many Wisconsinites. While most patients report using hearing protection at the shooting range, they often skip it while hunting out of concern for missing important environmental sounds. However, it is important to understand that just one gunshot can cause permanent effects, including hearing loss and/or tinnitus. The good news is there are several hearing protection options that allow you to stay aware of your surroundings and carry on conversations – while still protecting your ears from harmful noises like gunshots.

The Starkey Sound Gear line offers several product options that allow you to hear your surroundings while providing instant noise suppression when loud noise is detected such as a gunshot. Some of these products offer additional hearing support for those who need or desire it. Pricing varies depending on the product, ranging from \$150-\$1600/pair. Products are described below:

Phantom:

Custom molded for precise fit & optimized protection, they also allow wireless audio your iPhone. The rechargeable battery provides up to 23 hours of battery life from one charge.



Silver:

Custom molded for precise fit & optimized protection, they also offer volume control and are powered by disposable batteries.



Custom non-electronic:

These are an excellent and a more budget-friendly solution for effective & comfortable hearing protection.



Starkey Shield:

Non-custom option with flexible triple-flange style earbud designed to fit most ear shapes & sizes.



Double up! – It's important to wear two forms of hearing protection (earplugs + earmuffs) at the shooting range.

Audiologists at Professional Hearing Services will help you select which option is best for you. Get ready for hunting season by giving our office a call today!

How loud is too loud?

Sounds louder than 85 dB can cause permanent hearing damage. The louder the sound, the less time it takes to cause noise-induced hearing loss. Signs that you may have noise-induced hearing loss can include tinnitus, a sensation of pressure or fullness in the ears, or difficulty understanding speech.

SoundCheck Live is an app that measures the sound of your environment in real time. Immediately find out if sounds are safe or harmful using your smart phone.

Protecting your ears from loud noise is one of the easiest ways to reduce the risk of noise-induced hearing loss and tinnitus.



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