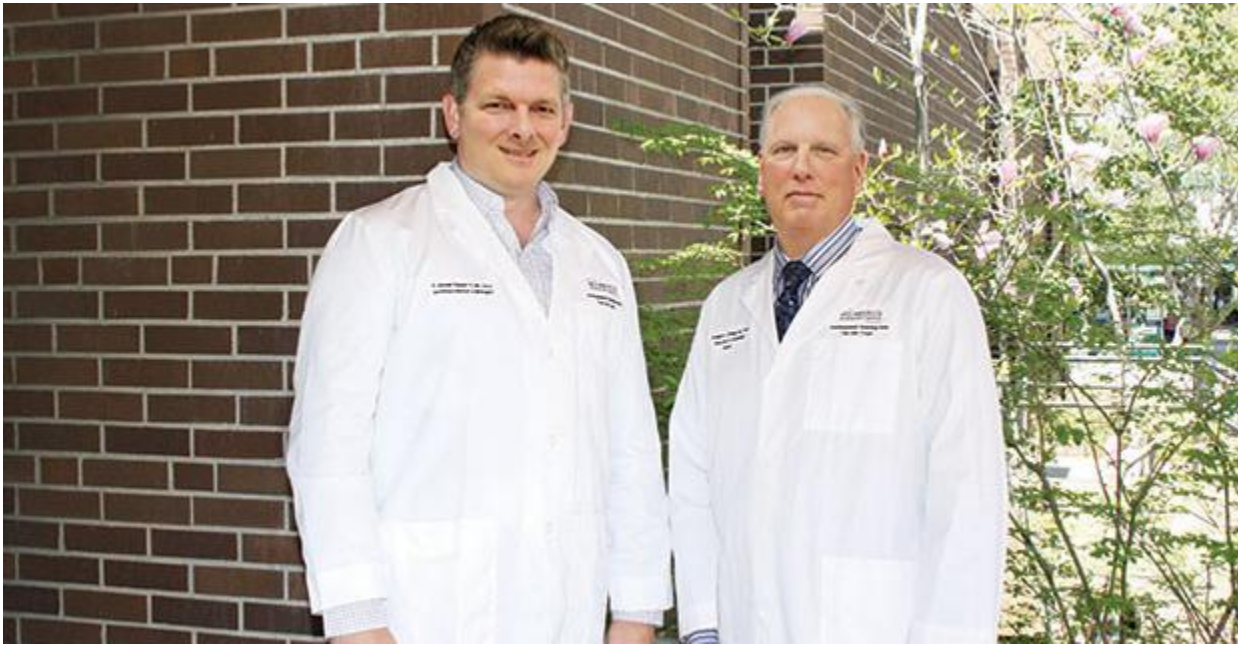


# Listening in a new era of audiology

by Madelyne Maag  
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What's that? What did you say? I can't hear you. Like the other four senses, hearing is an important factor that we all need in our lives. Most tend to take hearing loss for granted and ignore it until it starts to really impact their lives.

According to fact sheets produced by the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, there are over 36 million Americans that have a mild to severe degree of hearing loss. The National Institute's fact sheets also stated that 10 million American have suffered irreversible noise-induced hearing loss, and 30 million more are exposed to dangerous noise each day. This means that more Americans experiencing or exposed to an environment that could cause a hearing loss will need to find a solution. At Mid America Audiology Group, the staff and audiologists are dedicated to improve sound quality for their patients who need it.

Since its doors opened in 1989, Mid America Audiology Group has expanded and now offers professional services to patients in eight different office locations in the Metro East and Southern Illinois area. The main office is located in Alton, Illinois with satellites in Chester, Glen Carbon, Waterloo, Jerseyville, Greenville, Staunton and Granite City. The mission of the practice is to serve the community by providing excellent hearing health care and customer service by making sure patient satisfaction is put first. Mid America strives to help patients with a hearing impairment to reconnect to their world through education, quality service and the most current technology available.

“We see a variety of patients that range from age 2 to 102 with the majority being over 60 years of age,” said Gregory Maag, MA, CCC-A Director of Audiology and owner of Mid America Audiology Group. “Every patient’s situation is unique and our goal is to cater to their needs by finding a solution to improve their hearing.” Patients must keep in mind not all results from testing indicate a patient needs hearing aids. Mid America also offers products for preventative measures for hearing conservation. “We can offer patients different solutions to prevent as well as protect their hearing,” said Gregory Maag. “There are custom ear plugs for musicians as well as the avid hunters. It’s a noisy world out there and you must take charge of your own hearing health.”

What is an audiologist?

*Audiologists complete a master’s or doctorate level degree in audiology and a year of a supervised clinical fellowship program prior to obtaining state licensure and national board certification. This requires seven to nine years of post-secondary education, four to six years of clinical training which focuses on the medical, diagnostic and rehabilitative aspects of hearing loss and hearing aids. Audiologists must also pass a national standardized examination of core capabilities in diagnosis and management of hearing loss, in order to become eligible for state licensure.*

What to expect during a scheduled appointment?

“From a simple routine ear cleaning to hearing disorders, we see patients for a variety of reasons,” said Joe Hopper, a clinical audiologist at Mid America Audiology Group. “As an audiologist at Mid America we run through a four step process when we see a patient in order to find out what is going on.”

The first part of the process is an evaluation of the patient’s case history. After the evaluation, the audiologist runs through a few tests to assess the patient’s hearing.

“The first test we perform is the otoscopy, which involves looking inside the ear canal and ear drums,” said Joe Hopper a clinical audiologist at Mid America Audiology Group. “Followed by a tympanometry, to make sure there are no fluids or negative pressure in the middle ear. Then we test the patient’s hearing through a lateral acoustic reflexive, pure tone and a comprehensive audio-logical evaluation. These tests examine the different frequencies of tones and words that can or cannot be heard by a person. Once these test results are performed the audiologist is able to come up with a conclusion for a patient’s hearing loss and the offer steps to fix it.”

Why come to an Audiologist for help?

Audiologists are able to act as a guide along their patient’s journey. They build personal rapport with each patient and help improve the patient’s ability to hear. Hearing is just as important as your other senses, because it not only allows us to socially interact with the world, it physically affects us through balance and safety reasons. Seeking a professional, who can customize technology solutions and help effectively integrate speech comprehension, could change your life.

Reasons why you should not leave your hearing loss untreated or undiagnosed

Recent studies have shown show that untreated or undiagnosed hearing loss could have a psychological affect. This could cause individuals suffering from a hearing loss to experience, depression, worry, anxiety, paranoia, and social isolation. Many do not also consider the safety hazards associated with a hearing loss at home or in public. For example if patient was unable to hear an alarm going off at home or the siren of an emergency vehicle driving near them on the road, they are in serious danger. There have also been studies that link hearing loss to an increased risk for Dementia in elderly individuals.

On a more positive note, the average healthy 60-year-old often does not have a hearing loss. Although some people may or may not have a hearing loss, it is very important to get your hearing checked. Look at the different types of activities that are apart of your lifestyle, and think how these may affect your hearing. Even if you don’t have a hearing loss, it is important to keep your hearing in check by protecting it in various situations. If an individual is proactive by keeping their hearing in check, they will also be able to keep up socially with their friends and loved ones.

Why come to Mid America?

At Mid America Audiology group, the staff and audiologist are dedicated to cater to the needs of each patient. It is not about buying a hearing aid and placing it in someone’s

ear. Even the most expensive hearing aids can create frustration, if they are not personally tailored to your level of hearing loss and lifestyle needs. We match each individual's hearing aids based on their own hearing test. By using the most advanced fitting methods available we ensure that your devices are comfortable and provide you with maximum clarity.

“Our 29 years of experience ensures patients will receive the best care possible,” said Gregory Maag. “We absolutely love what we do because improving hearing and better communication to our patients’ lives is our passion. We strive to continue making individuals reconnect with their families and loved ones and are constantly motivated to do so by the joyful success stories we hear from our patients. At Mid America Audiology Group, we are Professional Hearing Care You Can Trust. Come See us or Call for more information.