

HEARING ASSOCIATES
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Changing Office Operations At Hearing Associates

Office operations continue to change daily at Hearing Associates. We are currently seeing patients in-office by appointment only. We are not accepting walk-ins. Appointment hours may vary due to limited quantities of personal protective equipment (PPE).

Since April 6, Hearing Associates has offered curbside service for hearing aid maintenance at our Mason City clinic. Please contact us before you come in. We ask that you pull into the drive-through between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday - Friday. Call 641-494-5180 once you arrive, and we will come to collect your devices.

You will be notified once your devices are ready for pick up, and we will bring them to your vehicle. This service is open to ALL current hearing aid users who need hearing aid cleaning, repair, or further instruction on how to use their devices properly. Please note that our waiting room will remain closed unless you have an appointment. For now, face masks are required to gain entry to the facility, and we appreciate you bringing one with you.

We appreciate your support and patience during this time and look forward to continuing our top-rated care and services. Thank you!

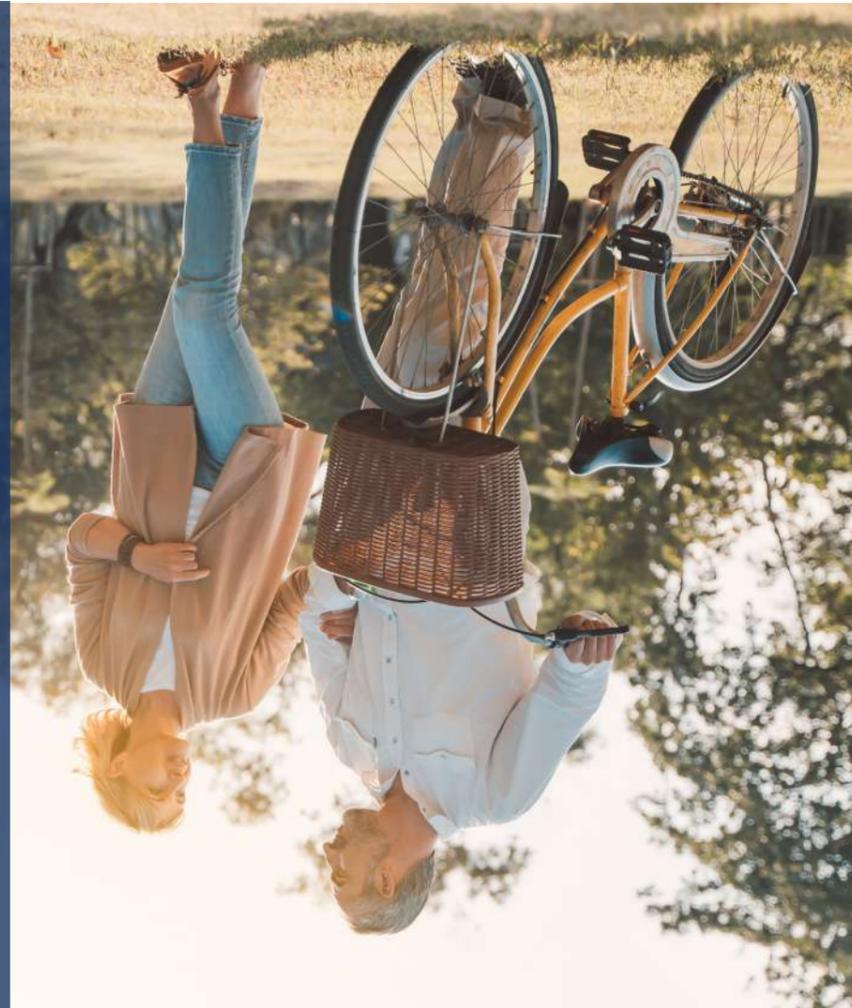


Telehealth Options Available

During this unique season, Hearing Associates can assist patients in office, curbside and from the comfort of their own homes. Our remote services include:

- Remote Programing
- Telehealth Appointments
- Phone Consultations

Call our offices and ask us about these digital and remote services.



Providing excellent customer service & quality hearing aids to our patients since 1987. Hearing Associates, P.C. is your hearing healthcare expert in Mason City, Northern Iowa, and Albert Lea, Minnesota.

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Call (800) 621-6424 or visit
HearingAssociatesMC.com

Can't Hear? You May Have Blocked Ears

You're wearing your hearing aids, watching your noise exposure, and aren't sick, but your hearing still feels muffled. What's the deal? You may have a blockage in your ear.

Blockages are caused by a number of internal and external factors.

Earwax: Your ears usually expel old earwax naturally. However, if you wear hearing aids, you may struggle with wax buildup. Wax can become impacted as it builds up, especially if you use cotton swabs in your ears. Visit an audiologist to have earwax safely removed and avoid infection.

Ear infections: Ear infections can occur because of an upper respiratory illness or earwax buildup. Infections cause your ear to retain fluid, leaving you

susceptible to viruses and bacteria. Inflammation puts your inner ear at risk for permanent damage. Go to the doctor if you experience pain, a temperature of 101° F or higher, or blood or pus is draining from your ear.

Changes in air pressure: Also called barotrauma, air pressure changes make your ears feel plugged. It most often occurs on airplanes and can be relieved by yawning or drinking water. You can also inhale, cover your nose and mouth, and gently try to exhale to alleviate the pressure.

Swimmer's ear: You don't have to swim laps every day to develop swimmer's ear. Your ears may get infected once water from the pool or shower gets trapped in your ear canal. Gently dab your ears with a bath towel or turn a

hairdryer on a low setting to dry them out. Over the counter ear drops are also available to relieve the blockage.

Children: Be aware of blockages in children's ears as well. If they've put something in their ear, pull the ear back and tip the head toward the afflicted ear to dislodge the blockage. Seek professional help if the item is lodged deep in the ear canal.

Remedying blockages is essential to good hearing health. If left untreated, they can lead to hearing loss or balance issues. Never insert a cotton swab or other object to clean your ears or remove a blockage. You can easily damage the inner ear or rupture your eardrum.

Mask Etiquette For Hearing Aids

It's an odd notion, but essential for those who wear hearing aids. Wearing a mask is a simple, preventative measure to protect yourself from the spread of COVID-19, but it can also be a pain if you wear behind-the-ear hearing aids.



Removing Your Mask

Masks with elastic straps can damage the tubing that connects your device to the speaker in your ear. Taking your mask on and off also poses the risk of knocking your hearing aids out of your ears. And if you've been out running errands all day, retracing your steps can get tedious.

Only remove your mask in a few, secure places, like your car or house. That way, if you do lose your hearing devices, you'll have fewer places to search. Some hearing aids have a search application if you lose one, but limiting the places you could lose your devices will save you some serious hassle.

Get Creative With Mask Straps

There's more than one way to create secure mask straps. Try out some of these ideas that will protect your face and reduce ear irritation.

Try a tie: If you make fabric masks, add four ties that secure behind the head. These are easily adjustable and won't interfere with hearing aids.

Headbands: Attach buttons to the sides of a cloth headband so you can secure elastics above the ear. Look online for free sample patterns.

Elastic extenders: Extensions can be purchased or made. Try a headband, ribbon, or fabric to create an extension that will secure the elastics behind your head. You'll still need buttons on the extension to direct the elastics away from the ears. You can also use a safety pin or paperclip if you're in a pinch.

Hairstyles: Secure your mask with the help of your hairdo. Pull your hair into a bun or ponytail, and secure the elastic straps around the hairstyle to lift them away from your hearing aids.

Your Hearing Aids Can Keep Your Career On Track

Hearing aids are incredible, technological marvels that do so much more than amplify sound. They keep you connected to your everyday life, including your work life. You'll be hard-pressed to find a career that doesn't require communication. From retail to construction, blue-collar to white-collar, we all must interact with clients, customers, and coworkers.

You won't be able to do that very well if you can't hear. Investing in hearing aids will keep you at your best so you can give your all on the job.



How Hearing Loss Impacts Your Work
Let's follow Anne around work for a day. Anne is an operator and driver at an industrial warehouse that utilizes forklifts and other heavy machinery daily. She wears a protective headset, but long-term exposure has damaged her hearing, and she struggles with sound clarity.

She has to regularly ask her coworkers to repeat themselves, especially if someone else is operating equipment. She misses out on a few procedural instructions and the reminder that there's a staff meeting later today.

If she's taking inventory and not paying attention, she puts herself at risk because she can't hear a forklift backing up or the alarm going off in

the warehouse. She also puts her coworkers at risk because she can't hear their warning shouts when she gets too close with her heavy pallet jack.

And Anne has mistakenly ordered 80 instead of 18 pallets on more than one occasion because she can't differentiate the words over the phone. Like Anne, we all need good hearing to do our jobs effectively.

Good hearing means easier communication. You won't have to worry about asking someone to repeat themselves over the phone for the third time when you invest in quality hearing aids. Your relationships with your clients and coworkers will also be better off when you can hear clearly.

What Workouts Mean For Your Hearing

Hitting the gym is a great way to boost circulation, burn calories, and relieve stress. It's also an excellent way to alleviate tinnitus symptoms because the increased blood flow reduces high blood pressure and inflammation that exacerbates the ringing in your ears.

It's important to note, however, that going all out at the gym can take its toll on your ears as well. If you're excessively straining your muscles, the increased exertion can cause pressure in your ears, which can lead to burst eardrums.



Signs of over-exertion include:

- Temporary or frequent tinnitus
- A full or clogged sensation in the ears
- Immediate soreness after your workout

The gym can also be a loud, chaotic place that will damage the sensitive hair cells in your ears. Earplugs are a good way to protect them from loud music and clanging equipment. And if you like to listen to music, make sure to turn down the volume on your headset or earbuds.