A PEN THAT CAN IMPROVE YOUR HEARING?

New, Discrete Assistive Listening Devices Offer Dramatic Improvements

Phonak Roger

Roger is a group of devices that can transform hearing aids and other implantable hearing devices into connected, multi-function communication devices, enabling users to hear well in a range of challenging listening environments where hearing and comprehension were previously impossible.

Roger Pen is a cutting-edge wireless microphone that enables people with hearing loss to hear and understand more speech in loud noise and over distance. It also features Bluetooth for cell phone calling, and can be used to listen to TV and multimedia.

Roger Clip-On Mic offers the same great sound quality as the Roger Pen, but has no Bluetooth connectivity.

TV Audio Streamer, which doubles as a battery-charging docking station, transmits audio from the TV or stereo system directly into the user’s hearing device.

(continued on page 4)
THE WORLD'S FIRST AND ONLY SINGLE-UNIT AUDIO PROCESSOR FOR COCHLEAR IMPLANTS

RONDO™

If you have a hearing loss, chances are that you’ve been wearing a hearing aid or audio processor for many years. Now, for the first time, RONDO delivers the freedom of an audio processor with room behind the ear. RONDO combines traditional audio processor components such as the coil, control unit and battery pack into one single unit. Fewer parts, no cable, and a feeling of freedom from wearing nothing behind the ear. Attaching the one-piece RONDO is straight forward. Setting changes can be made on the fly with the FineTuner remote control.

“...My Med-El CI was activated August 26, 2013. I remember activation vividly; I heard the first sound loud and clear. I had my back to the audiologist and realized I could hear words and conversation between she and her intern. I turned around and was, I realize now, in shock to be able to have a conversation. There were bells, chirps, and whistles but they didn’t interfere with communication. Two hours later, I stopped to get an oil change and ran next door to Potbelly’s for a soda. I was looking down, not paying attention and realized the cashier was talking to me! I asked him to repeat the question and he said, “has anything special happened today?” I replied, “Yes, I woke up deaf and now I can hear”. You could have heard a pin drop and then everyone in the restaurant cheered. Within two weeks I was at almost 100% word recognition. Radio and TV were a little tougher but I refused to give up. Within 4-6 weeks, I was able to have word recognition with the TV. Music took me a little longer but I’m able to enjoy music and movies without closed caption. The clarity is incredible. The bells, chirps, and whistles were just for the first few weeks. When I heard my children’s voices for the first time, I cried and cried. I never thought I would hear their voices again. I am completely satisfied with Med-El. In fact, I am scheduling my second CI and am definitely choosing Med-El. The Rondo is light weight and comfortable. I can wear glasses without any discomfort. The manufacturer has been extremely helpful. I would recommend Med-El to all CI candidates.” Julia, Dallas Ear Institute Patient, Dallas, TX

REHABILITATION FOR COCHLEAR IMPLANT RECIPIENTS

Everybody will experience their cochlear implant activation in a different way. Some people who received a cochlear implant after having been able to hear naturally say that the first voices they heard sounded like cartoon characters, while others say that sounds are just as they remember. In the cases of children activated at a very young age, sometimes they have never heard sounds that don’t come from a cochlear implant.

Whether you have just had your cochlear implant activated or have had many years or decades of experience, the best way for you to improve your listening and hearing is through regular exercise. This is because your hearing is not fixed in place: with each day and each new sound, your brain learns and adapts to the unique way that your cochlea “hears” its implant.

(Re)habilitation Exercises

Hearing rehabilitation helps you get the most benefit from your cochlear implant, the accessories that come with it and assistive listening technologies to improve hearing in meetings and on the telephone. A skilled hearing therapist evaluates your needs and guides you through the stages of listening and adjusting to your implant. The therapist develops home practice materials designed uniquely for you as you progress and learn to understand what you hear.

Med-El also has online tools available that help you to hear and identify different sounds – and if you’re wondering where to find them, Med-El’s got you covered: Soundscape is Med-El’s own suite of interactive games and activities that you can use from your very first day of hearing. There are activities for all different ages, and you can feel free to use whatever age level seems appropriate to you!

These activities and more are all available at www.medel.com/us/soundscape.

If you’d like to target your training, Med-El also provides downloadable documents that you can use when you’re away from the computer.

Check out the whole suite of BRIDGE downloads at www.medel.com/us/rehabilitation-downloads
Similar devices have been available in the past, but the Roger devices have two main differences.

1. New digital adaptive wireless technology provides clearer transmission with less delay than the Bluetooth technology in previous devices.
   
   The Roger Pen uses software that is continuously analyzing the surrounding noise and adjusting the microphones to compensate for environments with a lot of background noise. In addition to noise reduction, the Pen also senses its orientation. Depending on whether it is lying on a table, held in the hand, or worn by the speaker, it will configure the microphone mode, noise suppression and volume settings automatically to provide the best possible balance between speech and noise.

2. Improved, discrete design.
   
   Design-integrated Roger receivers can attach seamlessly onto select Phonak hearing aids for a stylish and discrete hearing solution. A mini universal receiver is also available and is compatible with practically all hearing instruments, cochlear implants and bone conduction processors. Roger Pen comes with a lanyard that can be worn around the neck, but it also works when held in the hand, lying on a desk or placed in a pocket.

Roger Solutions for Kids

Hearing aids and cochlear implants are sometimes not enough to allow a child full speech understanding in noisy situations and across distances. Roger can boost speech understanding and overcome listening challenges by helping a child understand the speaker (teacher, caregiver, or coach), no matter where they are – whether at the park, in a stroller, classroom, car, or on the playing field.

WHAT’S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A PERSONAL SOUND AMPLIFIER (PSA) AND A HEARING AID?

Thinking about ordering a hearing aid or sound amplifier from a magazine or late-night TV advertiser? Doing so could delay the diagnosis of a treatable or serious ear condition and lead to further hearing loss or other complications.

“The problem might be as simple as a wax impaction blocking the ear canal, which is easily treated, or at the other end of the spectrum, it could be something as serious as a tumor pressing on the hearing nerve,” says Eric Mann, M.D., Ph.D., at the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Many cases of hearing loss are related to aging and exposure to loud noise and hearing aids might be the solution. But while a prescription from your physician is not required for most kinds of hearing aids, it’s important to see a health care professional not only to rule out other medical causes of hearing loss, but to ensure that hearing aids are properly fitted and come with follow-up care.

Aids Versus Amplifiers

Consumers should not confuse hearing aids with personal sound amplification products (PSAPs). Hearing aids are intended to make up for impaired hearing. A PSAP, in contrast, is for people with normal hearing who have a desire or need to amplify sounds in certain situations. For example, a PSAP may be helpful for hunters or bird-watchers. They are often advertised as a way to listen to a television set to a low volume that won’t disturb someone sleeping nearby.

FDA regulates hearing aids as medical devices in order to assure their safety and effectiveness. PSAPs are not subject to medical device regulations.

Differences among hearing aids themselves are more complex, which is one of the many reasons a professional should be involved. Because hearing loss affects people in different ways, you need a device appropriate for your condition and tailored to your lifestyle.

Buyer Beware

FDA strongly encourages a medical evaluation before the purchase of a hearing aid. Hearing aid dispensers are required to tell you about the importance of a medical evaluation before they fit the aid. If you decide to forego an evaluation, you must sign a waiver.

Your primary care doctor may refer you to a specialist in ear, nose and throat conditions—an otolaryngologist (commonly known as an ENT specialist) – for evaluation and diagnosis of hearing loss.
THAT CAN HEAR LIKE YOUR EARS DO.

A REVOLUTIONARY HEARING AID THAT CAN HEAR LIKE YOUR EARS DO.

Lyric, the world’s first and only 100% invisible, 24/7 wearable, showerproof, for-months-at-a-time hearing device can.

Lyric’s unique design and placement works with your ear’s anatomy to deliver exceptional sound quality:

• Lyric uses your outer ear to naturally direct sound into your ear canal; no need for multiple settings or complicated programs
• 100% invisible, so you enjoy all the benefits of better hearing without anyone knowing you’re using a hearing device
• Lyric is designed to remain in your ear canal for months at a time
• Its proprietary battery is designed to last for months
• Lyric is designed to remain in your ear canal for months at a time
• Lyric has a programmable sound processing system designed to work millimeters from the eardrum
• It allows portability.
• Lyric's unique design and placement works with your ear's anatomy to deliver exceptional sound quality

Weather and emergency radios are important for anyone who wants up-to-the-minute, potentially life-saving information. A specialized weather radio that utilizes visual and vibrating alarms is even more important for the deaf and hard-of-hearing because they may not hear weather alerts, such as tornado sirens ringing in the distance.

The NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) weather radio broadcasts comprehensive weather and emergency information 24 hours a day. NOAA weather radio alerts include National Weather Service warnings, watches, and forecasts, as well as warnings for both natural and technological (chemical releases or oil spills) emergencies. A weather alerting radio for the deaf and hard-of-hearing works much like the commonly used smoke detector with flashing strobe lights. There is also the option of purchasing a bed shaker, so you can be alerted of unsafe conditions while sleeping. In addition to visual and vibrating alarms, the radio also provides simple text readouts and warning lights to indicate the level of alert (Statement, Watch or Warning). It is programmable for each state and/or county, and can work on batteries to allow portability.

For the deaf and hard-of-hearing, a specialized weather radio can be a lifesaver! If you feel that you or a loved one would benefit from this technology, please contact The Hearing Center at Dallas Ear Institute.

A BRIEF GUIDE TO TINNITUS (RINGING IN THE EARS)

Prevalence of Tinnitus

There are over 50 million reported cases of tinnitus in the United States alone. Of those cases, 15 million consider their tinnitus to be a significant problem and seek professional help. Approximately 2 million people in the United States have been debilitated by their tinnitus and are to considered have a crisis because of it.

What exactly is tinnitus?

Tinnitus is the perception of sound in the ears or head when there is no external sound present. It may be perceived as coming from one or both of the ears, or even from the head. Tinnitus may be ringing, rushing, roaring, hissing, or even sound like crickets or cicadas. Tinnitus may be caused by loud noise exposure, hearing loss, ototoxic drugs, damage to the auditory system, and many other factors. 80% of patients who report tinnitus also have hearing loss.

The Tinnitus Effect

The impact tinnitus has on one’s quality of life is determined by that individual’s reaction to the sound. Tinnitus can cause a patient to have difficulty concentrating, may cause a fear or anxiety response, and may lead to a feeling of helplessness. A patient’s tinnitus can interfere with the ability to sleep, hold a job, and even interact socially. This can lead to hopelessness and severe depression.

What can you do about your tinnitus?

Regrettably, the majority of patients are told by their physicians that “nothing can be done about tinnitus”. In reality, there are many treatment options available. These options may include sound therapy, amplification, and informational and directive counseling. No matter the cause of tinnitus, habitation and management are possible for most patients. If you are suffering from tinnitus, call our office to make an appointment with our team of experienced tinnitus treatment professionals. We will discuss your concerns with you and help you determine the best options for your personal approach to tinnitus management.

SKY Q – NEW FOR KIDS!

Brings the most advanced hearing aid technology to children of all ages with mild to profound hearing losses.

• Water resistant and dust tight so children and parents can depend upon its durability and reliability
• Tamperproof solutions for the battery door, ear hook and receivers for little ears
• Mix and Match multi-tone hearing solutions children will love to wear
Are people with hearing loss more likely to experience falls?

Hearing loss has been associated with a variety of conditions, including dementia, as detailed in our last issue. Recently, a study from the National Institute on Aging and Johns Hopkins University showed that hearing loss may also be a risk factor for a big problem, especially in the elderly population: falls.

In this recent study, over 2000 patients ages 40-69 were assessed for an association between falls and hearing loss. The investigators found that individuals with a 25 decibel hearing loss, classified as mild, were nearly three times more likely to have a history of falling. This finding also held true when accounting for other factors that could contribute to falls.

One possible explanation for the link of hearing loss with falls is that people who cannot hear well may not have a good awareness of their surroundings, making tripping and falling more likely. In addition, if a person with hearing loss spends more effort to hear, this extra cognitive load may overwhelm the brain, thus leaving less ability to focus on balance and other important functions.

Clearly, the association between hearing loss and falls is significant. It is of utmost importance that hearing loss is taken seriously as the negative effects can lead to other serious ailments.