

suburbanlife

Pinnacle ENT Associates offers hearing and communication tips for staying connected during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Keeping Connected During a Crisis

PENTA audiologist Melissa Reitnour, M.A., CCC-A, offers hearing and communication tips for staying connected during the COVID-19 pandemic.

by MELISSA REITNOUR, M.A., CCC-A

For the 48 million Americans with hearing loss, everyday life is a challenge. Navigating through a global pandemic is even tougher. As an audiologist, I panicked when I realized that mask use was essential during the pandemic, and yet, would be a challenge for my patients.

While face masks have become standard issue for most people, those with hearing loss often rely on lip-reading and facial cues to understand what is being said. In fact, most of us use lip-reading and facial features to help us understand speech. Interestingly, 35 percent of speech sounds are visible on the lips.

Clear Masks. Clear masks are a helpful option. You can do a quick web search to

find directions on making a clear mask at home. Homemade clear masks can also be found on Etsy.com. Likewise, commercially available clear masks are also available. Two brand name clear masks are ClearMask and Safe'N'Clear.

Pen and Paper. Two of my favorite tools to use when someone can't hear me are a pen and paper or a whiteboard. Write down the key concept and make sure it is understood before you move on to the next thought you want to communicate.

Smartphone Apps. A more 21st-century version of this is transcription apps from your cellphone. As you speak, your phone shows what you have said on the cellphone screen. There are both free and pay versions of this.

Talk Louder. Shouting is not helpful. However, in the case of mask use, raising your voice will probably help. The masks can make speech more than five dB softer. This decrease in dB can be the difference between speech being audible and inaudible.

Mask Ties. If you're a hearing device user, invest in a mask with ties instead of elastic bands, and make sure your hearing devices are insured for loss.



Melissa Reitnour, M.A., CCC-A, an audiologist with Pinnacle ENT Associates

People are losing their hearing aids often when taking off their masks.

Device Checks. For people using hearing devices, when the quality of speech heard through your hearing aids sounds muffled or unclear due to mask wearing, it is time to call your audiologist. The audiologist can program your hearing aids to enhance speech clarity and comprehension. ■



The audiologists at Pinnacle ENT Associates are only a phone call away. Call (610) 616-5085 or visit www.pentadocs.com for more information or to request an appointment today.



Photograph courtesy of Pinnacle ENT Associates



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October is Audiology Awareness Month!

The audiologists at Pinnacle ENT Associates want to ensure that you are hearing your best, especially during times like these, when staying connected with your friends and family is more important than ever before. Our concern is that during this unique time, your hearing care needs may be ignored. Our team can help with full audiological evaluations as well as hearing aid evaluations, fittings and repairs!

WE CARE ABOUT YOUR SAFETY!



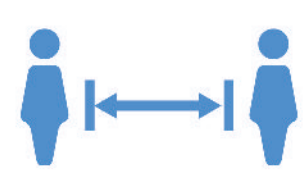
Masks required



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