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Hearing Healthcare News Written for the Most Trusted Physicians in Toronto & Mississauga by Smiles From Ear to Hear.



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Why “Hearing Health” Is Becoming a Mainstream Conversation

Written by Demetra Valente



With large tech brands raising awareness about hearing health and the Baby Boomer generation driving a sharp increase in the number of 70-year-olds nationwide, we’re seeing more individuals asking questions about their hearing abilities, hearing loss, and available care options.

For the first time in decades, hearing loss is shedding its outdated stigma. More people are eager to understand how to optimize their hearing and prioritize long-term hearing health.

As a trusted local GP, you’re likely encountering these patients, addressing their concerns, and guiding them toward the best options for care.

Here’s how a collaboration with our experienced and independent team of hearing care professionals can help support both you and your patients:

1. A Focus on Lifelong Hearing Health

While hearing aids are becoming more readily available through transactional channels, the expertise and personalized care needed to achieve lifelong hearing health remain scarce.

We are passionate about delivering comprehensive hearing healthcare—going far beyond just providing devices. Our mission is to help patients achieve a lifetime of better hearing, a value we know you share based on your exceptional reputation for patient-centred care.

2. Seamless Referrals and Trustworthy Care

As a busy professional managing a wide spectrum of health concerns, your time is valuable. You need referrals that are simple, seamless, and, above all, the right fit for your patients.

With a five-star reputation and the trust of thousands of local patients, we make referrals effortless and ensure every patient feels cared for and supported. Our streamlined approach ensures you can confidently recommend our services, knowing we will uphold your high standards.

3. A Shared Commitment to Community Health

We both have the privilege of caring for many of the same people in our community. By working together, we can

raise the bar for healthcare standards and help ensure everyone has access to the quality of care they deserve.

In a world where reputation is everything, you can trust that we operate with integrity, professionalism, and a patient-first approach. This commitment is woven into the very fabric of our practice.

The Simple Ask

When your patients express concerns about their hearing health—whether it’s difficulty hearing in conversations, the early signs of hearing loss, or managing long-term care—please know we’re here to help.

We aim to make it as easy as possible for you to connect your patients with the expert guidance and support they need to improve their hearing and quality of life.

Thank you for the work you do for our community. It would be an honour to partner with you in 2025 to continue making a positive difference for your patients.

Apple Releases Their Over-the-Counter Hearing Aids in the US

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

In October 2024, Apple rolled out iOS 18.1 to the US and several other countries, introducing new hearing health features for AirPods Pro 2 users. These updates included a self-guided hearing test and basic over-the-counter hearing aid functionality.

Shortly after, Apple released a TV commercial that quickly went viral, racking up over 30 million YouTube views, resulting in a surge in interest, with the term “hearing aid” hitting its highest search volume in two decades.

Although this technology isn’t available in Canada, and likely won’t be unless legislation dramatically changes, it does raise a question: What are Apple’s hearing health features actually like?

Having worked closely with some of our US colleagues, we have discovered the good, the bad, and the ugly.

The Good

As expected from Apple, the user experience is seamless and highly accessible. With just a few clicks, users can perform a simple pure-tone hearing test in under five minutes, generating an audiogram quickly and efficiently.

The results are impressively accurate,

closely aligning with those from a professional audiogram conducted in a sound booth. However, there is a slight margin for interpretation in Apple’s labelling. For instance, a 30 dB loss is categorized as “mild to no” hearing loss, which might differ from traditional clinical definitions. Higher loss levels, however, activate the hearing aid functionality.

The Bad

Despite its strengths, Apple’s approach has notable shortcomings. While the hearing test encourages users to seek professional help for sudden hearing loss, it lacks a crucial step: urging users to verify their results with a qualified hearing care professional.

This oversight carries significant implications. Many individuals might mistakenly believe that difficulty hearing automatically equates to needing hearing aids. However, hearing challenges can arise from a variety of causes unrelated to permanent hearing loss. Issues such as earwax blockage, fluid in the middle ear, or conditions like auditory processing disorder require entirely different treatments.

Without this broader context, users risk overlooking treatable conditions or opting for solutions that may not

address their specific needs.

The Ugly

One area of confusion lies in Apple’s use of the term “clinical-grade hearing aid” to describe what is, in reality, a self-fitting device for mild to moderate hearing loss. This terminology has led some to believe that AirPods are a suitable replacement for prescription hearing aids, which they’re not.

The recent TV commercial added to the confusion. It features a father, seemingly with profound hearing loss, experiencing the joy of hearing his daughter play the guitar for the first time. While the ad is moving, it gives the impression that AirPods can address severe hearing challenges, which they are not built to do.

The Bottom Line

Apple is raising awareness for the importance of hearing health and prioritizing hearing loss across the globe, which is long overdue.

Although this has its positives, it’s also having people misunderstand what achieving better hearing actually looks like and is causing additional confusion. If you have patients who ask for your advice or opinion on what Apple is doing in the US, or have any patients who are concerned about their hearing and require guidance, then please know that we’re here to help.

Who are Smiles From Ear to Hear?

Our reputation is built on a heartfelt, family-focused approach that nurtures your overall health and wellness. Our compassionate team is devoted to helping you achieve optimal wellbeing through personalized solutions crafted just for you. Your journey with us begins with our signature ‘360 Wellness Examination’—a thorough, multi-point evaluation ensuring a holistic treatment plan tailored to your needs.



Smiles from Ear to Hear

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