

# Listen Up for Healthy Ears

Children laughing, birds chirping and music ringing from the radio. These are the sweet sounds of healthy ears. It is crucial to ensure the ongoing health of the ears.

From otitis media (middle ear infection that causes hearing loss in children) to tinnitus (ringing in the ears caused by damage to the hearing nerve), many medical conditions can lead to irreversible hearing impairment or deafness.

If you suspect that you, a family member or friend have a problem with hearing, seek an immediate diagnosis from a physician. Prompt attention from a medical professional could lead to positive results from treatment or medication, rather than surgery.

## HEARING LOSS

The third most common physical condition after arthritis and heart disease, hearing loss is a major public health issue. About 48 million



American adults report some degree of hearing loss, according to the Hearing Loss Association of America.

It also is important to know the warning signs of hearing loss, which can include difficulty hearing conversations, frequently asking others to repeat their statements

extra care by wiping the outer ear with a washcloth or tissue. Do not use bobby pins or sharp, pointed objects to clean your ears. These objects may injure the ear canal or eardrum.

- Earwax is the ear's mechanism for self-cleaning, so let it do its work. If you have a buildup of wax that is blocking your hearing, see your doctor to have it removed.

- If you experience itching or pain in your ears, consult with your primary care physician to determine the issue and appropriate treatment. He or she will determine if you need to see a specialist.

- If you have pierced ears, clean your earrings and earlobes regularly with rubbing alcohol.

or misunderstanding what other people say.

## EAR CLEANING TIPS

Cleaning your ears is a simple yet highly critical aspect of overall health. The Cleveland Clinic Foundation offers the following tips:

- Clean your ears with