

BEST WISHES

Southern Standard readers are invited to extend happy birthday and anniversary best wishes to friends and loved ones through this weekly column. Please submit your messages by our noon deadline each Thursday. No more than three wishes to any individual, please.

Feb. 3 – Happy belated 12th birthday Alex Tallent. Love, Mom, Dad and Aaron.

Feb. 3 – Alex Tallent, happy belated birthday wishes. Love, Pappy, Nana, Uncle Dustin and Leslie.

Food Bank donation



From left, Darrell Wiser, Jeff Womack and Preston Greer of First Baptist Church are shown with some of the items the church donated to the Warren County Emergency Food Bank.

Listen up for these hearing aid buying tips

Being an informed health care consumer is hard work. There is information everywhere. But how do you sift through it and make sense of it all? And how do you know what is reliable and what isn't?

Sorting through the noise when buying hearing aids is no exception.

In the past several months, there has been significant media coverage and social media discussion about the Over-the-Counter Hearing Aid Act of 2017, which will make certain types of hearing aids available over the counter in the next several years. At the same time, there are many advertisements about devices called Personal Sound Amplification Products (PSAPs) - which are not hearing aids and are not designed to treat hearing loss - adding to the confusion.

To help consumers cut through the clutter, the Better Hearing Institute (BHI) has pulled together six essential facts for people with hearing loss who are considering the purchase of hearing aids.

BHI recommends that anyone who is ready to address their hearing loss keep these points in mind:

1. Addressing hearing loss promptly and appropriately is important for health and quality of life. Research shows that hearing loss is linked to cognitive decline and dementia, depression, an increased risk of falls and hospitalization, and greater health care costs. Hearing loss also is linked to cardiovascular disease, diabetes, moderate chronic kidney disease, obesity, sleep apnea and rheumatoid arthritis,

studies show.

2. Hearing loss is not a simple mechanical issue and cannot be remedied as easily as buying a pair of reader glasses at the grocery store. Hearing loss is a complex sensory loss. It involves brain function and frequency losses specific to the individual. Human hearing involves a multifaceted interplay between specific parts of the ears and brain. For this reason, hearing aids - which are designed specifically to compensate for hearing loss - must be cleared by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to ensure safety and efficacy.
3. Hearing aids need to be custom-fitted and programmed specifically for the individual so they correctly address those specific frequencies the individual has trouble hearing. Follow-up hearing aid adjustments, along with training to help consumers adjust to amplification and re-learn how to hear and process sounds they had been missing, further increase user satisfaction.
4. Personal sound amplifiers (PSAPs) are not hearing aids and are not cleared by the FDA to treat hearing loss. Consumers need to be careful not to confuse hearing aids with PSAPs, which simply turn up the volume - sometimes to dangerously high decibel levels - regardless of the individual's specific hearing needs. Over-amplifying in this way may put the consumer at risk of greater hearing damage.
5. Seeing a hearing care professional is the best safety net for proper diagnosis and treatment. Going to a hearing care professional helps ensure that any underlying medical issue behind a hearing loss is identified and addressed. It also helps ensure that the person's hearing loss is safely and effectively treated. Hearing care professionals - audiologists, hearing aid specialists and ENTs (Ear, Nose and Throat doctors or doctors of otology and otolaryngology) - are best suited to help consumers with hearing loss.

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