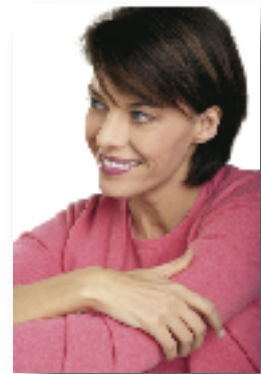


Sound Sense

Issue 3

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Phonak power goes micro No one can see how much you can hear innovation

- Years of innovation and testing have resulted in the development of digital hearing aids to take you into the future. At the heart of Acuris is state-of-the-art digital technology. Siemens goal is to ensure that the Acuris ear-to-ear (e2e) wireless hearing aids provide outstanding performance in many situations allowing ease, simplicity and comfort for the wearer.
- microPower by Phonak breaks through the size barrier by offering a new miniaturized high performance hearing system for active users with significant hearing loss.
- In the past, users who needed extra power in their hearing aids had to choose between a hearing instrument that was highly visible but effective, or smaller in size but unable to meet their hearing needs. microPower's innovative design including Canal Receiver Technology (CRT) offers more.
- CRT technology places the hearing instrument's receiver or speaker in the ear canal. This feature allows the size of the Behind-the-Ear hearing aid to be significantly reduced to an ultra small casing. With the separation of the microphone and receiver, the main sources of annoying acoustic feedback (whistle) are very much reduced. Also this is the first micro hearing aid to have an automatic telephone coil (T-coil) and FM capability. Hassle-free telephone use, even with cordless or mobile telephones is advantageous and helps keep you in touch more easily.



microPower

- At a weight of only two grams or 0.07 oz, microPower introduces a new level of ease for the wearer. The discreet housing, clear connecting tube through which sound is electronically transmitted, and custom shell moulded to the contours of the ear canal, allow for a secure and comfortable placement in the ear. This clever design also reduces occlusion (i.e. the feeling of the ears being blocked).
- It is well known that long term users of hearing aids with a lot of power have a distinct sound quality preference. microPower offers a choice that allows matching of these preferences.
- If you prefer, there are attractive remote controls offering discreet and convenient user control.
- An enormous advantage is that if a microPower receiver fails we can replace it here in the clinic without having to send the aid to Phonak. This means that you are not without your hearing aids for any significant length of time.
- Do remember - hearing aids can help you get the best out of the hearing that you have left but cannot restore your hearing.

New dB30 telephone from Eircom

Eircom has launched a phone aimed at those who are hard of hearing. The dB30 phone has a very loud ring tone – up to 30 times louder than normal phones and extra large buttons. It is suitable also if you have a visual impairment. It has a bright incoming call flasher and most importantly is compatible with a hearing aid. It is also perfect for noisy work environments as both the incoming and outgoing voices can be amplified and includes a signal processor which minimises background noise.

If you are an Eircom social benefit customer renting a standard telephone you can exchange it for the dB30 without charge.

The Eircom dB30 retails at €64.95, including delivery, and has a two year warranty.

Further information from freephone 1-800-202073

compatible with a hearing aid

Cholesteatoma

What is it?

It is difficult to define Cholesteatoma concisely but it is possible to describe it. It is characterised by the abnormal accumulation of skin cells in the middle ear. It has a tendency to expand but not invade tissue, become infected and destroy nearby important structures such as the bones or ossicles of the middle ear, the facial nerve, the balance organ, and most importantly of all the skull structures. It can be removed surgically but has a tendency to recur. A cholesteatoma may be dormant a long time until it is discovered and treated: thus, it becomes chronic. It is usually the running ear, hearing loss, pain or dizziness that uncovers the underlying cholesteatoma. Cholesteatomas are NOT a form of cancer. They are benign tumours. As they grow they look like an onion peel of white skin formed into a ball.

What causes Cholesteatoma?

A cholesteatoma usually occurs because of poor eustachian tube function as well as infection in the middle ear. The eustachian tube conveys air from the back of the nose into the middle ear to equalize ear pressure ("clear the ears"). When the eustachian tube works poorly perhaps due to allergy, a cold or sinusitis, the air in the middle ear is absorbed by the body, and a partial vacuum results in the ear. The vacuum pressure sucks in a pouch or sac by stretching the eardrum, especially areas weakened by previous infections. This sac may in certain circumstances become a cholesteatoma. A rare congenital form of cholesteatoma (one present at birth) can occur in the middle ear and elsewhere, such as in the nearby skull bones. However, the type of cholesteatoma associated with ear infections is more common.

What makes Cholesteatoma such a dreaded condition?

Cholesteatoma is often infected, resulting in a running smelling ear. It destroys its bony surrounding, slowly and consistently leading to a hearing loss. It may also destroy the labyrinth or area that deals with balance resulting in vertigo. Even after meticulous surgery cholesteatoma has a tendency to return. Facial paralysis may also result and the sinuses may be affected. The most dangerous complications are where the skull is invaded but these are rare if the patient sees the doctor early on.

CT scan can be very helpful in diagnosing a cholesteatoma as it may indicate the presence of and extent of this soft tissue behind the ear drum. It may also show the amount of bone destruction and the presence of any abnormal passages in the balance system.

Finally cholesteatoma is a rare but treatable ear condition. Persons who have recurrent ear infections and the previously mentioned symptoms are examined for possible cholesteatomas by their GP. If the GP is concerned they are referred to an Ear, Nose and Throat consultant for further diagnosis and management.



rare and treatable

Siemens Centra

A hearing aid – not a supermarket!

The ideal hearing solution would ultimately function more like a hearing partner. It would provide the most natural, personal and comfortable listening experience possible. It would tune out annoying noises but leave voices intact. It would let you identify where sounds are coming from and even remember your preferred volume settings and adjust automatically. Siemens Centra hearing aids offer an ideal hearing solution and focus on what really matters – you. Siemens Centra ensure that you have the most natural, personal and comfortable listening experience possible.

Siemens Centra is the result of “wearer-centered engineering” and sets a new standard in hearing aid performance, ease and usability i.e. it lets the world revolve around you. The Centra portfolio includes ITE (in-the-ear) BTE (behind-the-ear) and OTE (over-the-ear open fit) in a broad choice of colours to suit your individual needs.

Exclusive Sound Smoothing technology targets and suppresses impulsive non-speech sounds such as breaking glass, clanging dishes etc. that traditional noise reduction and speech enhancement systems cannot effectively process. Thanks to DataLearning technology Siemens Centra can remember your volume preferences in individual listening programs.

DataLearning technology learns the wearer’s changes to volume over time in each program, then automatically fine-tunes itself for optimal hearing in any hearing environment. To help you locate sounds more efficiently Centra features e2e (ear to ear) wireless technology.



centra

Where two hearing aids are fitted e2e wireless keeps both instruments properly balanced at all times. This means that both aids are connected to each other by radio waves. Additionally, you can simultaneously control the volume and listening program of both aids manually or via an optional ePocket remote control. Both aids function as one synchronized holistic system.

Additionally Siemens Centra hearing aids include an advanced feedback (whistle) cancellation system, an electronic wind noise reduction system and a directional microphone system which automatically adapts to the listening environment.

We have successfully fitted a significant number of these hearing aids. Patient feedback is very positive and encouraging and certainly Centra aids in conjunction with good fitting techniques and proper patient counseling allow the wearer live life to the fullest.

Please contact us if you would like further information on this or any hearing system you would like to learn more about.

Breakthrough in hearing aid battery design and technology

Rayovac has 70 years experience of producing batteries for hearing aids

The new advanced Rayovac zinc air hearing aid batteries offer higher power whilst increasing battery life. The new battery improves performance in “higher demand” aids used by people who are severely hearing-impaired, including digital and programmable aids.



Up to now, those suffering from severe hearing loss were forced to settle for shorter battery life in exchange for more power. The new Rayovac zinc air batteries have up to 17% more power to meet the demands of these more powerful hearing aids.

Advanced – Shelf Life

Rayovac is the only battery on the market supporting a four-year freshness date code.

Advanced – Testing Criteria

Rayovac has developed an advanced testing regime to evaluate critical hearing aid attributes. The American National Standards Institute and the International Electrotechnical Commission (European equivalent of American Institute) established this procedure – both independent of Rayovac.

It was concluded from the results of the tests that Rayovac Advanced hearing aid batteries are the longest lasting and most consistent performing batteries available. These batteries are exclusively available through our clinic in Limerick at a very competitive price. If you cannot come in for them our receptionist Margaret Kennedy will post them out on request.

Oticon Delta hearing aid wins Prestigious Red Dot Award for radical new design approach to hearing aids

Oticon, the innovative Danish hearing aid manufacturers with over 100 years of experience, has recently launched 'Delta' - a new hearing aid evolved to provide a hearing solution in line with what users actually want. Delta is mainly for the person with a mild to moderate high frequency loss who essentially has a speech in noise problem rather than a classic hearing loss i.e. - good loudness sensation and hearing in the lower frequencies and a hearing loss restricted to the higher frequencies. Its aim is to maximise speech understanding in the most difficult listening situations.

Delta is nothing like a traditional hearing aid. It consists of a core unit made with a set of high-quality multidirectional microphones, the receiver or speaker unit which is placed directly in the ear canal with a dome and a thin transparent tube connecting the two. Importantly the dome is easily replaced and integrates wax protection. For some users, a bit more loudness may be required and Delta meets this need with a semi-closed Plus Dome.

Delta's discreet shape looks good and comes in a wide variety of interchangeable colours – all the usual beige, brown and grey colours and some which have never been seen before in hearing aids such as Racing Green, Samoa Blue, Wildlife (leopard print) and Cabernet Red.



The amplification strategy in Delta is designed to boost clarity and thereby enhance speech understanding, especially in noisy surroundings. In quiet surroundings the aim is to avoid unnecessary amplification which can be very annoying. Delta is driven by Artificial Intelligence which does millions of calculations simultaneously for any given listening situation no matter how difficult. Delta is a sophisticated but not complicated hearing aid.

Despite the availability of increasingly advanced technology it is only in the recent past that people with a mild to moderate high frequency hearing loss have become the focus of attention.

To see Oticon Delta for yourself and learn more about hearing loss why not contact our clinic in Limerick.

What is a cochlear implant?

Cochlear implants provide useful hearing to adults and children who no longer benefit from a hearing aid due to very poor hearing. They consist of:

The internal part: the receiver, surgically implanted in the mastoid bone behind the ear, with electrodes inserted into the inner ear, or cochlea.

The external part: the microphone and speech processor convert sound into an electrical signal which is sent to the electrodes in the inner ear. These then send the signal through the auditory nerve to the brain where it is perceived as sound.

Who may benefit from an implant?

Many adults, who have been deafened, have a very severe/profound hearing loss and have used hearing aids in the past and now get little from them, can benefit from implantation.

Also, children who have a confirmed severe/profound hearing loss can benefit from implantation. It is now considered safe to implant a child under the age of one, following careful assessment.

Teenagers with severe/profound hearing loss, having used hearing aids may now fit the implant criteria and could benefit from implantation.

Those deafened by meningitis should be referred as quickly as possible for assessment as bony growth can occur quickly in the cochlea, which is the inner ear, a coiled up tube resembling a snail's shell, making implantation difficult or impossible.

Implanting both ears is increasingly being considered. Bilateral implants give better hearing in noise and improve the ability to localise sounds.

If you would like any further information contact us here in the clinic or your ENT consultant or Health Service Executive Audiology services to discuss the process of referral to the Cochlear Implant Centre in Beaumont Hospital, Dublin.