



GRAND ROUNDS

Have you noticed yourself peppering more and more conversations with: “Pardon?” or “I’m sorry, I didn’t quite catch that.”?

Do you find it difficult to keep up with conversations in crowded areas or when there is background noise?

Do you turn the TV or radio louder than others prefer?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you may have a hearing loss. It is extremely important that you talk to a hearing health care professional who can help you determine the type and degree of that loss and what course of action you can take.

May is Speech and Hearing Month, and Renfrew Victoria Hospital would like you to know more about the hearing services it provides.

Each month, Dr. Jeff Jones, who is an ear, nose and throat specialist in Pembroke, runs a clinic at RVH with Andrea Graham, an audiologist.

Patients are referred to the clinic by their family doctor, and range in age from five to 95.

An appointment for a hearing assessment at the clinic takes approximately 45 minutes. Using specialized equipment, the patient responds to a series of beeps in the range of frequencies most important for speech. By measuring which beeps are heard, the professionals can pinpoint the nature of any hearing loss.

The causes of hearing loss can include everything from a build-up of wax within the ear, or damage done by repeated exposure to loud noise, to a medical condition. Once the cause and extent of the hearing loss is determined, action can be taken to correct the problem. This might involve removal of the wax, the prescription of an appropriate hearing aid, or a surgical repair.

Graham notes that hearing aids are no longer the nuisance items they once were.

“An entry level hearing aid today is better than the top-of-the-line hearing aids of four years ago,” she says, explaining that today’s technology allows for automatic volume adjustments and easy use.

Graham also has some tips for those whose hearing loss cannot be corrected (as well as for their caregivers and those who come in contact with them):

- Get into the habit of speaking face-to-face. Visual clues make communication much easier.
- Let others know where you lost track of a conversation. They will be a lot less frustrated if they can pick up from there, rather than starting back at the very beginning.
- Make sure you have a person’s attention before you start speaking to them. A conversation makes a lot more sense if they can catch it from the very beginning.

Dealing with hearing loss can be a frustrating experience. It is a syndrome

that cannot be seen or easily tracked, and it often creeps up over time.

If you have concerns about your own hearing or that of someone you know, make an appointment with your family doctor and ask whether the audiology clinic at RVH might be helpful for you.



Andrea Graham provides hearing tests as part of the audiology clinics provided at RVH.