

LIVING BETTER, LONGER

Diet, wellness and exercise are all keys to living your best life as The Villages works to become America's Healthiest Hometown. The community is home to both major players and innovative programs at the hyper-local level.



UF HEALTH

The southeast's most comprehensive academic health center locally operates UF Health The Villages Hospital, UF Health The Villages Hospital Freestanding ER and UF Health Leesburg hospital. [www.UFHealth.org](http://www.UFHealth.org)



THE VILLAGES HEALTH

The network operates six primary care centers and two specialty care centers locally. It also offers hundreds of free health and wellness classes online that are both live and pre-recorded. [www.TheVillagesHealth.com](http://www.TheVillagesHealth.com)



THE VILLAGES GROWN

The hyper-local community food system is anchored by a 45-acre growing complex to enable farm-to-table nutrition. It also operates a retail store, online ordering and an airstream mobile market. [www.TheVillagesHealth.com](http://www.TheVillagesHealth.com)



THE ENRICHMENT ACADEMY

The program operates a variety of fee based extra-curriculum courses on health and wellness topics for mind, body and spirit. Residents and anyone older than age 30 may register. [www.TheEnrichmentAcademy.org](http://www.TheEnrichmentAcademy.org)

SUNDAY, LOCAL COMMENTARY | MONDAY, LOCAL COLUMNISTS | TUESDAY & THURSDAY, POLITICAL OPINION | WEDNESDAY, WELLNESS ADVICE | FRIDAY, READER THOUGHTS

A VIEW FROM THE VILLAGES HEALTH

When it comes to hearing and brain health, you may think you are doing enough. Making sure we see our general practitioner and perhaps having our first hearing test may seem like we are heading in the right direction.



Dr. Al Turri

COMMENTARY

But a lot is happening at a level that you can't see, and we now know that early hearing loss has the potential to impact our relationships at home, work, and play, increase our frailty, dramatically increase our risk of dementia, and strip away our independence.

Did you know that addressing hearing loss and tinnitus at the first sign of a problem can help you avoid and reduce the amount of hearing loss treatment you may need later on? It's true! Whether you have received a referral to get your ears checked from your primary care physician, your ear, nose and throat doctor, or your family is simply pushing you to get help, now may be the best time to call and make that first appointment. In addition to taking care of your ears

by protecting them from loud noises (i.e., lawn mowers, power tools, etc.), seeing a Doctor of Audiology through The Villages Health Audiology & Hearing Health Services starting at the age of 50 may provide huge benefits!

Important Facts About Hearing Loss

According to the American Academy of Audiology, it is recommended that adults aged 50 years young should have their first appointment with a Doctor of Audiology. Unfortunately, not enough people realize that the single most modifiable lifestyle factor for reducing dementia risk is the early treatment of hearing loss. Given that most people wait seven to 10 years before addressing their hearing loss or tinnitus, that is seven to 10 years too long! For those who wait, there is possibly more extensive damage to the ears and brain that will require more extensive treatment plans to address the issues. By getting started early, you may be saving yourself from years of frustration and embarrassment associated with your hearing loss. You may also be helping to reduce or prevent more unfortunate side effects of untreated hearing loss, namely increased risk of

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falls, hospitalizations, dementia, and premature death.

The Villages Health Audiology & Hearing Health Services can also help to ensure that any difficulty you are having, whether it be hearing loss or tinnitus, isn't the sign of a much bigger problem. When you get started in treating your hearing loss and tinnitus, the foundation for a healthy brain and beautiful life as you age is being laid. The audiologist can essentially keep an eye on your ears and your brain at every stage as you age and can address concerns sooner, rather than later. The more you can do to treat your

hearing, tinnitus and associated memory issues early, the better off you will be!

Problem Areas

Having your best hearing as you age keeps you in the conversation, literally. If you or a loved one are experiencing early hearing loss, you know exactly what I mean. Missing what others are saying at home and in public is very frustrating and can be embarrassing. Whether you are at a restaurant, church, or the playground with the grandchildren, not being part of the conversation (or just nodding your way through the conversation) is an unacceptable way to go through life. Being able to hear gives you a great deal of self-confidence.

An important condition that early hearing loss treatment can address is difficulty hearing in background noise, i.e., difficulty following a conversation. Believe me when I say this, you may think you are able to "fake" your way through a night out with family and friends, but you aren't fooling anybody but yourself. Often, it is our family and friends who tell us first that we better do something about our hearing! With new advances in noise-reduction technology, we can give you access to all the sounds you want to hear while

successfully reducing annoying background noise.

Getting Started

Hearing loss and tinnitus, whatever the cause may be, can be effectively treated. The fact is, as we age our chances of developing these conditions increase astronomically. Nearly 50% of people between the age of 60-70 years young experience hearing loss and/or tinnitus, and the numbers only increase from there! I have treated more patients in their 50s in the past few years than I did in the first 15 years of my career combined!

Your first step is to simply arrange a consultation with The Villages Health Audiology & Hearing Health Services at 352-269-6534 or [www.thevillageshealth.com/hearing-loss](http://www.thevillageshealth.com/hearing-loss).

You can also ask your primary care physician for more information. The treatment and guidance you receive today may help save you from years of frustration, embarrassment, and possibly more devastating medical conditions, i.e., dementia, later. When it comes to your hearing and cognitive healthcare, early detection is the key to reducing the risk of future problems!

Dr. Al Turri is the director of audiology for The Villages Health.



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